1 INT. FUNERAL SERVICE - DAY 1

FADE UP on service with a SPEAKER giving a eulogy.

SPEAKER
Don't mourn for Joe Strombel. Joe Strombel led a full life. A great friend - always there for someone in need, a generous drinking companion, a great lover of life, of love, of laughter and ladies -

Audience is sorrowful but laughs at their departed pal.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)
He was a lover - of ribald jokes and hot music - but above all - first and foremost, Joe Strombel was a journalist - a newspaperman in the best tradition... A great credit to the fourth estate. It didn't matter if the bombs in the war zone were falling, it didn't matter how high up the political scandal went or how many big corporations or small time racketeers leaned on him - whatever the risk, if there was a story there, Joe went after it - and he usually got it. He got it first - but first he got it right. Reporters like Joe Strombel don't come along very often. He will be sorely missed.

CUT TO:

2 INT. PUB - DAY 2

Later in day. Several colleague reporters after the service are in a pub drinking and reminiscing about their deceased buddy. Ad-lib quality.

JACK
I remember when he got to interview Osama bin Laden - and he did a long story on how the West was unprepared for attacks that Al Qaeda was planning.

PAUL
Yes, he had great instincts - we had some terrific times together in Algeria - he was going with a very beautiful Moroccan woman -

2 CONTINUED: 2

AL
Oh don't get me started on Joe Strombel and women - I remember he had an affair with an American diplomat's wife right here in London.

TOM
I was with him when the story broke about Prince Charles - that made him persona non grata with the Royal Family.

AL
Except for Princess Diana who remained a good friend.

JACK
Joe began as a police reporter and he was a damn good one. One of the best. Maybe the best.

PAUL
Joe Strombel and I were trapped once in Afghanistan and I really expected to be shot by the Taliban but Joe figured out a way to bribe someone and we got out - we wore burkas but we lived to write another day.

JACK
Everyone loved him.

AL
Not always British intelligence.

PAUL
Because he usually got the information two steps ahead of them.

TOM
Not Richard Nixon.

They laugh and drink. They toast.

JACK
Wherever you are now, Joe - it won't be the same without you.

They drink up as we -

CUT TO:

3 EXT. DEATH BOAT - NIGHT 3

Fog or mist - a boat with DEATH at the helm drifts slowly and silently with rows of cargo, that is, the recently deceased aboard. They are going to "the other side". As it glides across the lake the passengers, about twenty, varied types and ages, mostly older, sit or stand wondering about their lives or destination now.

CARL
I didn't know - how was I to realize the pilot light was out. I was reading my latest issue of 'Country Life' and I lit up a cigarette - that's all I remember.

CUT OR PAN TO:

ROGERS
I should have bought the house on Sloane Street - that's my one regret - I could have had it for a song - today it's worth a fortune.

JUDY
What good would it do you?

ROGERS
I guess... still...

JUDY
I have no regrets. I did it all.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. DEATH BOAT - NIGHT 4

Another vignette.

BENSON
(To person lighting up)
You shouldn't - it's terrible for you.

LOOMIS
I'm here to tell you, the heimlich manoeuver doesn't always work.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. DEATH BOAT - NIGHT 5

JOE STROMBEL's introduction.

MOLLY
What's your name?

JOE
Joe Strombel.

MOLLY
I suppose you don't deserve to be here either?

JOE
I can't complain. At least my heart stopped in my sleep. Could've been worse.

MOLLY
My husband and I were married twenty years - we decided the world was becoming more and more hopeless and our dreams weren't coming true. We decided on a suicide pact. We bought two pistols, and had some caviar, champagne, and at the exact same moment put the guns to our heads and pulled the trigger - except I went a split second earlier and he changed his mind. Now he's dating my younger sister.

JOE
Tough luck.

MOLLY
I wonder where we're headed?

JOE
I'll see if I can find out anything.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. HOTEL - DAY 6

Film director, MIKE TINSLEY emerging from his limo in front of a hotel like The Dorchester. He bounds inside and on the way some fans say:

FANS
Loved your last picture Mr. Tinsley - you really have a way with actors.

7 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY 7

He is in the lobby. As he strides to elevators he is accosted by Sondra Pransky a young, American girl.

SONDRA
Mr. Tinsley -

MIKE
Yes?

SONDRA
Sondra Pransky.

MIKE
Who?

SONDRA
Sondra Pransky. I wrote you. I'm the journalism student from Adair College. I requested an interview with you for our school paper.

MIKE
Oh - er -

SONDRA
And you, probably your secretary because I know how busy a film director gets - but you wrote if I happened to be in London this summer you might have the time - and I'm spending the summer visiting friends here - wait, I think I have your letter -

MIKE
See, right now I'm rather tied up-

SONDRA
Here it is - this is very important to me - your new movie is opening in New York in the fall and you have a real following up at my school - which is near Rochester - I mean it's so freezing up there in the winter - but you're this icon -

MIKE
(weighs it for a second, then -)
(MORE)

7 CONTINUED: 7

MIKE (cont'd)
Ok, come on. But we'll have to make it quick.

CUT TO:

8 INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY 8

They enter suite. She pulls out pad and pencil.

SONDRA
Oh what a suite - it must cost a fortune... You wanna say? Or -

MIKE
Drink?

SONDRA
Drink?

MIKE
Whiskey?

SONDRA
On the job?

MIKE
I thought all hard hitting journalists -

SONDRA
I'm not really hard hitting. This is going to be a very flattering piece. Well - just one tiny one -

MIKE
(pouring)
So you're studying journalism at - where?

SONDRA
Adair - it's a small school but we have a great lacrosse team. I do the cultural features for the paper. My real goal is to eventually do more serious stuff - not that culture is not serious - especially movies. Who are your main influences?

MIKE
(gives her a shot of whiskey and has one)
Here - and when you say - more serious stuff...

SONDRA
(drinks, it's rough)
Oh, I wanna do political journalism - investigative reporting - god, that's strong.

8 CONTINUED: 8

He refills her glass.

SONDRA (CONT'D)
I have very definite ideas about the direction journalism has to take to keep pace with the post-9/11 world.
(belts down another)

MIKE
And what made you go into journalism?

SONDRA
Can I tell you, everybody was against it - see, originally I wasn't even going to go to college. I was going to become a dental hygienist like my sister Beverly. And don't get me wrong - I think it's a great job - I respect teeth and gums - particularly gums - my whole family's in orthodontics - but I want to do something more exciting with my life - more significant. I mean I know I have this idealized conception of reporters but er - hey, I'm doing all the talking and you're in a rush - so tell me about your next project.

MIKE
And you're from New York?

SONDRA
(starting to feel drink)
Brooklyn - we moved from Queens to Park Slope. We got a very good deal on a horse - a house - actually it used to be a stable... but I live up at school in the dorm with this girl, Esperanza - I mean is that a name? And she is a piece of work - but funny - er, is it true you allow your actors to improvise freely?

MIKE
And you're vacationing here?

8 CONTINUED: 8

SONDRA
I'm friendly with this very upper class British family because our families met years ago in Florida - we were all in Palm Beach because my mother won a visit to Palm Beach and I got friendly with Vivian, their daughter, and we kept up the friendship - she'll visit us some summers -

MIKE
(offers drink)
Another?

SONDRA
(accepting)
It does have a steadying effect - the truth is, I'm a little nervous - this is my first big interview and I'm not really doing so well on the paper - you'd be surprised how much competition there is up there - so your ex-wife is in this movie - was that awkward?

MIKE
(takes her hand confidentially)
It was hard, Sondra. I was very hurt over the breakup. I had lost my confidence.

SONDRA
No, you're such a genius - I mean my whole generation considers your movies totally intellectual - the magnificent way you eschew toilet humour - it's ennobling - I'm a little high...

MIKE
The truth is, I wondered if I'd ever love again?

SONDRA
Why not? You're in your prime - attractive - extremely good teeth, whoever did the caps?

MIKE
Do you think I'm attractive?

SONDRA
Oh yes. And I'm very critical.

8 CONTINUED: 8

MIKE
(closer)
Y'know you're very pretty Sondra - you'd be great to play Desirée in the remake I'm planning on Napoleon.

SONDRA
I've never acted. I'd be too scared. But I grew up loving movies. I guess that's where I got my image of what it's like to work on a paper.

MIKE
Really?

SONDRA
Yes, 'cause I'm a romantic person by nature. I mean it's silly but I have this highly glamorized view of being a reporter...

MIKE
(moving in too close)
I'm a romantic too. We're a vanishing breed, Sondra.

SONDRA
(he's on top of her now)
How was it working with Ann Beale? She's so gifted and beautiful.

MIKE
I'd trade all the gifted and beautiful women in the world for contact with one real soul. One unspoiled heart that still believes in romanticism.

He kisses her.

SONDRA
What are you doing?

MIKE
If you have to ask, I'm doing it wrong.

He kisses her, laying her down.

CUT TO:

9 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 9

Sondra and her pal Vivian at Vivian's Belgravia house where Sondra is a guest.

SONDRA
So I slept with him but I never got the interview. What kind of reporter am I?

VIVIAN
How was the sex?

SONDRA
I was so drunk I can hardly remember. All I recall is the second it was over - he got a phone call and left suddenly for Thailand.

VIVIAN
Thailand?

SONDRA
Justin Richards was fired and he was asked to step in and take over the picture. Oh Vivian - I told everyone at school that I had an exclusive with Michael Tinsley.

VIVIAN
You were nervous, you're inexperienced, you drank, he's a charming genius. Y'know you're a very attractive, sexy girl - you have to learn to keep your guard up if you're going to interview movers and shakers in hotel rooms - not that I'd have minded a roll in the hay with Michael Tinsley.

SONDRA
But I didn't get the story. At least if I had used my feminine wiles like Katharine Hepburn or Rosalind Russell, maybe I wasn't cut out -

VIVIAN
Oh stop. Now come on. We'll have lunch at the Ivy, we'll take my little brother to the show, which he's so excited about - we'll go out to that party tonight.

(MORE)

9 CONTINUED: 9

VIVIAN (cont'd)
There's going to be some gorgeous guys. You're always complaining all the men you meet are losers. C'mon, so you blew the interview - it's not life or death.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. DEATH BOAT - NIGHT 10

Outward bound boat. The deceased. Joe is querying the DEATH FIGURE.

JOE
Where are we heading?

No answer. He peels off some bills.

JOE (CONT'D)
This mean anything to you?

No response. He drifts on and meets a woman named JANE.

JANE
He doesn't give answers, I tried it.

JOE
Joe Strombel - coronary thrombosis.

JANE
Jane Cook - what'd you do?

JOE
Reporter. What about you?

JANE
I was personal secretary to Peter Lyman - Lord Lyman's son.

JOE
Oh yes - impressive young man -

JANE
You knew him?

JOE
Only by reputation - but I like what I know. I think he's got a real future in politics. How'd you die?

JANE
I think I was poisoned.

10 CONTINUED: 10

JOE
You think - Why? *******

JANE
I believe I was poisoned because I was on the verge of confirming a terrible suspicion.

JOE
Yes? What suspicion is that?

JANE
That Peter Lyman is the serial killer known to the police as the Tarot Card Killer.

JOE
What?

JANE
I assume you're aware of that case?

JOE
I did a story two years ago when the tarot killings first started - but Peter Lyman? My god, what on earth made you suspect, of all people, this rich, young, handsome, above reproach citizen?

JANE
You recall the last murder? The police found a clue. *******
****

JOE
Yes - a cufflink - I saw it in the paper - unusual - antique, wasn't it? *******
****
****

JANE *******
Art deco - Peter had the exact pair. *******
****

JOE *******
So could have the Tarot Killer - the world is full of coincidences. *******
****
****

JANE *******
Except I noticed Peter had only one left - he had lost the other. *******
****

10 CONTINUED: 10

JOE ******
Hmm - really? Still - although it ******
is a very tantalizing point - did ******
you inform the police or was that ******
too sticky? ******

10 CONTINUED: 10

JANE
I checked the next day, hoping I was wrong and that I'd find the pair but now even the remaining one was missing - I concluded he did not want to be found with the matching one. I phoned my lawyer immediately and asked his advice on whether to report it or not. I thought I heard a click on the phone - as if someone had been listening. Later that day, after tea - I died suddenly. *******

JOE
My god - that is suspicious. It's hard to believe but if Peter Lyman turned out to be the Tarot Killer, I mean, what a story. *******

JANE
I knew you'd appreciate it when you said you were a reporter.

JOE
(thinking wild-eyed)
This would be such a dynamite scoop. And I got it first.

JANE
Unfortunately where you're heading there's no first - only, last.

CUT TO:

11 INT. STAGE SHOW - DAY 11

Jugglers on stage, a lively show going on, music - an audience sits and watches and in the audience are Vivian, Sondra, and Vivian's kid brother, age about ten or eleven, RICK.

11 CONTINUED: 11

VIVIAN
(to her brother)
That's enough sweets - you had chocolate cake at lunch.

RICK
(to both girls)
Thanks for bringing me, I'm having a great time.

Stage show continues.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. DEATH BOAT - NIGHT 12

Ship of doomed souls. Joe Strombel, using some TBD ingenuity somehow manages to elude the guardians of the dead in their black, ominous garb, and slide noiselessly off the back of the boat - treading water he realizes he is nowhere.

CUT BACK TO:

13 INT. STAGE SHOW - DAY 13

Show in progress. The MASTER OF CEREMONIES either in person or by announcement in theatre says -

M.C.
Ladies and gentlemen - prepare yourselves for the astonishing magic of Splendini!

SPLENDINI enters - a typical hack magician with many jazzy looking effects and does a trick or two - standard stuff, flash paper, a Zombie, maybe rising card or milk pitcher. The audience buys it. At some point his assistant wheels out a large cabinet lacquered and Chinese looking. (Splendini nee Sid).

SID
For this, I need a volunteer.

Usual nonsense, shy people, some wave hands, he picks one or two and somehow Sondra finds herself a good natured semi-skeptical volunteer.

SONDRA
No - not me -

RICK
I'll go - I'll do it -

13 CONTINUED: 13

SONDRA
I had too much wine at lunch - you go.

SID
No children - this is serious stuff. I'd hate to lose another kid, the parents get so touchy.

VIVIAN
Go ahead, you're the extrovert.

Ad-libs, finally Sondra is a good sport and goes up.

SID
Here's a pretty young lady - what's your name?

SONDRA
Sondra Pransky.

SID
Oh, you sound like a landsman - United States, right? Don't tell me, I've got a perfect ear - Alabama.

SONDRA
Close, Brooklyn.

SID
God bless you darling, me too, what do you do? Tell the people.

SONDRA
I go to school.

SID
School. They hated me at school. I was drummed out of kindergarten for cheating at milk... ha, ha... cheating at milk - what are you studying - or are they studying you?...ha, ha. Don't tell me, I'm great at guessing occupations - dental hygienist?

SONDRA
(not funny to her)
I'm studying journalism.

SID
Oh a reporter - you're very lovely - just don't misquote me.
(MORE)

13 CONTINUED: 13

SID (cont'd)
No, seriously, let's hear it for her... god bless you darling, you'll come up with a great scoop one day, maybe two scoops, chocolate and vanilla... I'm teasing... You're a good sport... you married?

SONDRA
No.

SID
Why not? All that money on face work - no, I'm kidding...

SONDRA
(pointedly)
I'm not married because all the men I meet are jerks.

SID
Oh really? All the men you meet are jerks? What does that say about me?

SONDRA
Is that a trick question?

SID
Funny - funny - she's quick - hold this -

Gives her something that bursts into flowers.

SONDRA
Oh!

SID
Don't be nervous - I'm only going to dematerialize you - ever had all your molecules broken up so you could vanish by mental telepathy?

SONDRA
Go easy on me - I just ate.

SID
Funny - don't keep topping the master. Don't worry, we'll take good care of you - what's your sign, sweetheart?

SONDRA
My sign?

13 CONTINUED: 13

SID
Don't tell me - Sagittarius.

SONDRA
Virgo.

SID
I was close - let's hear it for Virgo. The virgin - no, I won't ask you - ok, darling, step into the cabinet - prepare to be decomposed and made immaterial but not irrelevant - don't worry, it won't hurt - much.

SONDRA
Just don't tickle me.

SID
Funny - funny - tell them what you just told me. She said, just don't tickle me. God bless you darling - the good lord gave you a sense of humor - if more people had a sense of humor maybe the world wouldn't be in the state it's in - what's your sign?

SONDRA
I just told you.

SID
Oh that's right - Virgo - get in the box -

SONDRA
Huh?

SID
In the box, in the box - let's go, I got commitments in other media - ladies and gentlemen, before your very eyes, Miss Sondra Mandelbaum -

SONDRA
Pransky -

SID
Sorry, I used to know a Mandelbaum - Sondra I believe - but she didn't have your charm - Miss Pransky will quietly dematerialize in the cabinet as I agitate her very molecules.
(MORE)

13 CONTINUED: 13

SID (cont'd)
You do have molecules don't you? Don't answer.

Claps hand over her mouth. She gets in, he locks cabinet. He calls to her, her voice from inside now.

SID (CONT'D)
You ok Sondra darling?

SONDRA
(voice)
I'm just fine.

SID
Now just let's pivot the cabinet to be sure there's nothing behind it -

Spins cabinet around, it stands alone.

Inside cabinet, Sondra is there - a good sport.

Splendini closes and locks cabinet - more nonsense.

SID (CONT'D)
And now - I Splendini The Strange - will concentrate - I call on the spirits of the occult to help me disengage the molecules of Miss Sondra Mandelbaum -

SONDRA
(voice)
Pransky -

SID
Pransky, Mandelbaum, you take off the same holidays. Spirits arise - spirits do your black magic - work your miracles that we mortals can only marvel at - are you still in one piece Sondra?

CUT BACK TO:

14 INT. STAGE SHOW/CABINET - DAY 14

Inside to Sondra.

SONDRA
Yes - I'm here - uh -

Suddenly Joe Strombel materializes in there with her.

JOE
You're a journalist - right?

14 CONTINUED: 14

SONDRA
Ohmigod, what's going on?

JOE
Are you a journalist? Those are the vibrations I concentrated on.

SONDRA
Me? I -

JOE
You have to be. I'm travelling through eternity to find a journalist -

SONDRA
I'm a reporter for my school paper. What are you doing in here?

JOE
School paper? Oh Christ. Well you'll have to do. I have no time. They're after me.

SONDRA
Who? What is this? This is part of the trick -

JOE
The guardians of the deceased. I can feel them approaching.

SONDRA
What do I do? If you're in on the trick -

JOE
I am not part of the trick. I am here from the land of the departed.

CUT BACK TO:

15 INT. STAGE SHOW - DAY 15

SID
Spirits work your wonders - transfer the molecules of Sondra - Pransky into the ether - How you doing Sondra? Feel like you're coming apart?

15 CONTINUED: 15

SONDRA
(voice)
It's getting a little crowded in here.

SID
I love her - I love this kid - crowded in here - hang in there - that's just your molecules coming apart.

CUT BACK TO:

16 INT. STAGE SHOW/CABINET - DAY 16

JOE
I'm Joe Strombel. I have the scoop of the decade about the Tarot Card Killer and if it pans out, it's incredible - a big name, murder, prostitution - oh Christ - they're close, they're closing in.

CUT BACK TO:

17 INT. STAGE SHOW - DAY 17

Splendini who opens cabinet and reveals it's empty. Sondra and Strombel are hidden by the deceptive partition that usually accounts for the vanishing.

SID
Gone - Sondra - You are gone! I don't know where she is - she never left a forwarding address.

Sid closes cabinet.

SID (CONT'D)
Hope I can bring her back.

CUT BACK TO:

18 INT. STAGE SHOW/CABINET - DAY 18

She's there with Joe.

JOE
They're drawing me back - I'm fading - I need to give you some information - you're a journalist - big story - big - big...big...scoop - Peter Lyman -

18 CONTINUED: 18

He's gone.

CUT BACK TO:

19 INT. STAGE SHOW - DAY 19

Suddenly the cabinet is thrown open, the audience applauds and we cut to Splendini completing the effect.

SID
Thank god she's returned! The spirits put the little student back together - better check out all your genes and chromosomes Sondra - have a nice trip?

SONDRA
I -

SID
Let's hear it for Sondra Mandelbaum - Pransky - Sondra Pransky.

Much applause.

CUT TO:

20 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 20

SONDRA
I'm telling you, it was the craziest thing.

VIVIAN
Well it's all mirrors.

SONDRA
No Vivian - this man said he found me because he was seeking a reporter.

VIVIAN
Yes but it had to be one of Splendini's assistants - probably helping to work the vanishing part.

SONDRA
No - you don't understand. He said his name was Joe Strombel.

VIVIAN
Yes. And?

20 CONTINUED: 20

SONDRA
And that he was dead.

VIVIAN
Need I say more?

SONDRA
Who's Peter Lyman?

VIVIAN
Isn't he Lord Lyman's son? Why?

SONDRA
I think he said his name. A scoop, the Tarot Card Killer - what's that?

VIVIAN
That I do know about. That's been going on for two years now - he's a serial killer who leaves a Tarot card with the body of every woman he strangles.

SONDRA
My god - that's pretty awful.

VIVIAN
Remember - you did have a lot of white wine at lunch - and it is traumatic going on stage. Hey - we're gonna be late for the party.

CUT TO:

20A INT. PARTY - NIGHT 20A

Party - music - young people - dancing.

DAN
(young man who dances with Sondra)
What are you thinking about? You seem lost in thought.

SONDRA
What do you know about the Tarot Card Killer?

DAN
He kills and leaves Tarot cards... That's all I know -

SONDRA
What exactly are Tarot cards?

20A CONTINUED: 20A

DAN
I don't know - fortune telling cards - but you don't have to worry - he only kills prostitutes with short cut brunette hair and your hair is long.

CUT TO:

21 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 21

They are asleep at home. Sondra wakes in the middle of the night. Too much is on her mind. She goes downstairs quietly and sits at the computer. She brings up Tarot Card Killer.

The screen reads out information like - Serial killer sought. Tenth prostitute slain. Tarot card trademark. No suspects in Tarot killings. After one year hiatus, Tarot Killer strikes again.

There should be the usual information and photos and clips.

Sondra brings up Tarot cards - cut into see some information on them.

21 CONTINUED: 21

Sondra next brings up the name Joe Strombel and sees he is a real journalist who looks like the man she met and who died recently. She is amazed.

CUT TO:

22 INT. THEATRE/BACK STAGE - DAY 22

Next day. Splendini is rehearsing some new trick, perhaps a guillotine effect or levitation.

GUARD
There's a lady to see you sir.

SID
Me?
(notices her)
Ohmigod - it's Mandelbaum, from the school paper.

SONDRA
It's Pransky and I have to talk to you privately.

SID
(who is locked in to handcuffs)
God damn Houdini handcuffs, hand me that lock pick.

SONDRA
This is very important. It's about that cabinet you put me in.

SID
Uh - oh, I smell a frivolous lawsuit. Okay, what can I do for you Sondra? You're gonna tell me you now suffer from dizzy spells -

SONDRA
While I was in your Chinese box.

SID
The Molecular DeMaterializer - yes -

SONDRA
A spirit materialized.

SID
Uh-huh.

SONDRA
I'm very serious Mr. Splendini.

22 CONTINUED: 22

SID
You can drop the Splendini - my name's Sidney Waterman. I go exotic to give the square haircuts a little charisma -

SONDRA
I'm trying to tell you a fact.

SID
What fact?

SONDRA
That while I was inside your molecule box -

SID
The DeMaterializer? Yes -

SONDRA
A man appeared.

SID
What kind of man?

SONDRA
A male.

SID
Yes, that's usually the case with men.

SONDRA
A deceased journalist, Joe Strombel.

SID
Uh-huh.

SONDRA
His spirit materialized right next to me. First I thought he was one of your stooges.

SID
I don't use stooges. They get health benefits.

22 CONTINUED: 22

SONDRA
He said he had escaped from the land of the departed because he had come upon a terrific scoop and he was seeking out a journalist - obviously my vibrations and his tuned in on one another - not that he said that but I'm putting two and two together.

SID
Could you put two and two together someplace else - you're starting to sound crazy and I have work to do.

SONDRA
I Googled the obituaries and there was a Joe Strombel - a terrific reporter who died a few days ago.

SID
Darling, and I say this with all due respect, you're a total flake - get some rest - stop smoking whatever it is you smoke and let me be.

SONDRA
Sidney, I need your help.

SID
Darling - Sondra - and don't get me wrong - I love you - but leave here...you're a crazy lady - ok? I don't know what your problem is - if you drink or you do crack or went off your Prozac suddenly -

SONDRA
I'm telling you -

SID
God bless you - I feel for you, I really do - but get help - you need help - now don't make me call security...

SONDRA
I'm sorry but you put me in that weird molecule box -

22 CONTINUED: 22

SID
The DeMaterializer - I invented it and built it myself - as I do with many of my illusions - but they're only tricks. I'm sure you noticed the false back and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for going along with it and not giving the secret away - I was always dependent on the kindness of strangers - you know what that's from? You know what that's from?

SONDRA
A spirit materialized when I was in there.

SID
(moving her toward door)
I know, I know - George Strombel -

SONDRA
Joe Strombel.

SID
Joe, George - do names matter once your dead? And exactly where is the land of the departed? Think about it - and while you do, go back on your Lithium or whatever -

SONDRA
Wait, I haven't told you the rest.

SID
There is no rest darling. God bless you, I'm a busy man, I'm an artist.

SONDRA
And I'm a journalist and he has a possible big scoop about the Tarot Card Killer.

SID
The who?

SONDRA
I didn't know who it was either but I Googled it and over the past few years there's been a serial killer who murders short haired brunette prostitutes.

22 CONTINUED:

SID
I don't live in London. I don't follow their problems. We got our own serial killers in America - can you go now.

SONDRA
By the body of each strangled woman there's a Tarot card left.

SID
Actually the last time I played London I did read about that case - cause I know Tarot cards - it's the Judgement card he drops - very creepy - baffled Scotland Yard for years - well it's been nice talking to you - if you're ever in my neighborhood, keep going.

SONDRA
He said there was a big name involved and a scoop -

SID
Who said?

SONDRA
The spirit in the DeMaterializer.

SID
(moving her to exit)
She's still with the spirit - I love you honey, you're an original - have a good rest of your life.

SONDRA
(not allowing herself to be put out)
Can you put me back in your cabinet and do the trick again?

SID
Some other time. When I'm not busy... I'll show you how the trick works - so you don't have these nightmares.

SONDRA
(getting annoyed)
Can you just put me in there and do it one more time? What am I asking you? What is wrong with you?

(MORE)

22 CONTINUED: 22

SONDRA (cont'd)
I'm a fellow New Yorker - believe me, your time is not that valuable - you're not the President - you're not the Pope - you're a shnooky little magician - and I say that with all due respect.

SID
If nothing happens, will you get out of my life?

SONDRA
Nothing would please me more.

SID
You're such a pushy -

SONDRA
Don't say it.

SID
Come on stage - get in the Goddam cabinet - we'll do the routine and then go back to your jerk-water little college and I say jerk-water not in a demeaning way-

SONDRA
Just put me in there. I want to make it easy for this dead guy to contact me.

SID
Why don't you just leave your phone number at the morgue.

SONDRA
I can't wait to describe you in the piece I write about this experience.

SID
It's high cheekbones and a granite body - just trying to help.

CUT TO:

CUT TO:

23 OMITTED (PART INSERTED IN TO SCENE 22) 23

24 INT. STAGE - DAY 24

She's inside the cabinet.

24 CONTINUED: 24

SID
Come oh spirits - return - help us mortals to experience a miracle - a true miracle -
(calls to her)
So? Anything?

CUT TO:

25 INT. STAGE/CABINET - DAY 25

SONDRA
Just keep your spiel going properly.

CUT BACK TO:

26 INT. STAGE - DAY 26

SID
Right. Arise oh spirits and guide us through the dematerialization and the agitation of the molecules - dance oh molecules -

CUT BACK TO:

27 INT. STAGE/CABINET - DAY 27

SONDRA
(trying to make it happen)
Mr. Strombel? Joe? I'm Sondra Pransky. I'm a journalist at Adair - maybe I'm not the most experienced journalist but somehow you managed to find me - I'm sure you were trying to contact a bigger deal but I guess these things are hard to control. I can only say, what I lack in experience I make up for in dedication.

CUT BACK TO:

28 INT. STAGE - DAY 28

SID
What are you mumbling?

CUT BACK TO:

29 INT. STAGE/CABINET - DAY 29

SONDRA
Try harder.

CUT TO:

30 INT. STAGE - DAY 30

SID
I'm doing my usual routine. Come and make the journey from the occult limbo of nothingness to make our subject Sondra's molecules break apart - help us oh spirits - help us - let's go little Sondra - losing patience.

SONDRA
(voice)
Nothing yet.

SID
Don't tell me you're still alone?

SONDRA
(voice)
Yes.

SID
(opens cabinet)
That's it honey, finito - go back home - get some rest - and don't mention this little episode to anyone - they'll take away your driver's license.

SONDRA
I can't understand it.

SID
Uh-huh.

SONDRA
No - really - I really thought -

SID
Thought what? That this little gimmick I put together out of plywood is for real? That the departed spirits come back? I don't know what you're on but don't try and smuggle it through customs.

30 CONTINUED: 30

SONDRA
I - I -

SID
Goodbye...

She walks toward exit when suddenly they hear a voice.

JOE'S VOICE
Sondra - Sondra -

She turns, Sid looks toward box - the cabinet doors swing open and Joe materializes.

SONDRA
Mr. Strombel.

JOE
(stepping out)
Listen to me Sondra - listen carefully - write this down - it's a big story.

SONDRA
(to a stunned Sid)
You have a pencil?

He hands her one still almost in a trance.

JOE
I've only got a minute - hurry -

SONDRA
Ok, what's the story?

JOE
There's good reason to believe Peter Lyman - you got that name? He's the son of Lord Lyman - he's a businessman - rich, good looking, very successful - that Peter Lyman may be the Tarot Card Serial Killer.

SONDRA
(writing)
I broke the point!

JOE
Hurry! They're almost here.

SONDRA
Ok -

Sid produces pen from an easy trick.

30 CONTINUED: 30

JOE
If so - he's murdered a dozen women - short haired brunette prostitutes. If it turns out to be Lyman it will be the biggest story that's hit London since Jack The Ripper.

SONDRA
Wait - not so fast - Is Jack The Ripper capitalized?

JOE
We don't know when he'll strike next but more women will be murdered till he's stopped.

SONDRA
I'll go right to the police.

JOE
No! God, what kind of reporter are you? That would be a disaster. He's a respected millionaire - you can't accuse anyone, much less a man like that without substantial proof. Once you alert him to the fact you're suspicious he'll be impossible to trap - not to mention doubly dangerous. It's very possible he poisoned his secretary because he suspected that she was learning the truth. You have to get the story first - and get it right.

SONDRA
So - none of this is certain.

JOE
My gut tells me there's a big scoop here. The kind reporters dream of - right now no one else has the information. If I was still around I'd find a way to get the facts and break this wide open. Believe me, Sondra - you can wait your whole life for a story like this - don't blow it - and be careful. Lives hang in the balance - your own possibly. Gotta go - gotta go - they're in the room...

The minions of the dead enter the theater and come toward him. Cut to:

30 CONTINUED: 30

Sid and Sondra watching. Cut to:

Their POV and we see the shadow of death raise his cloak and engulf Joe who vanishes. There is a sound of wind rushing and finally Sondra and Sid are alone, all is quiet.

SID
Well - I think I need an ocean voyage.

SONDRA
I told you. Didn't I tell you? What are we going to do?

SID
What do you mean, we? I'm checking into the Betty Ford Clinic.

SONDRA
I'm sitting on top of one of the biggest stories - the Tarot killer may be Peter Lyman - whoever he is.

SID
I don't care what Hamlet's father said - I'd still call the police.

SONDRA
He specifically said we have to get the facts first.

SID
Look honey, I make it a practice never to take advice from anyone who's been dead for over three days.

SONDRA
That was Joe Strombel. The Joe Strombel.

SID
How can you be sure?

SONDRA
I Googled him. I know all about him. He's a legend.

SID
I need a drink. I'm vibrating like a joy buzzer.

30 CONTINUED: 30

SONDRA
He was a great reporter. Somehow he got hold of a big story and he just won't let anything stop him from getting it into print.

SID
Yes - I admire his perseverance but there's nothing you can do. You're a little twit from a school paper - and I say that -

SONDRA
Yes, I know, with all due respect but I've got the inside track, I've got the scoop.

SID
And I've got a nuclear migraine.

SONDRA
You've gotta help me.

SID
Hey, this is not my venue, I'm a prestidigitator. Coin tricks, card tricks -

SONDRA
But I'm a reporter and this is a once in a lifetime story.

SID
You're a reporter but for a school paper - take it from me, kid - you're in way over your head. Maybe you should share the story.

SONDRA
Are you nuts? I'm going to dig out the facts and peddle it right here to every paper in town.

SID
Listen to her - soon you'll be smoking cigarettes and drinking black coffee out of a container.

SONDRA
We don't have a lot of time - people's lives are at stake. This guy's a serial killer.

30 CONTINUED: 30

SID
Yes, I heard that part. That's when I knew I was gonna make other plans.

SONDRA
He doesn't strike for awhile and then he strikes in clusters.

SID
Do everyone a favor - go to the police. You're going to get into big trouble.

SONDRA
And tell them what?

SID
Whatever he said - Lord Lyman's son - Peter, may be the Tarot Killer -

SONDRA
And when they ask me how I know?

SID
Tell 'em that - oh - tell 'em - tell 'em you - don't tell 'em anything, they'll put you away.

SONDRA
Exactly. What am I gonna say? I got this tip from a dead man?

SID
Look this is not our business, we're visitors here...

SONDRA
We've got to get enough proof so we're not laughed out of town.

SID
Key word - proof - how?

SONDRA
I don't know - but I'm sure if we put out heads together.

SID
You'll hear a hollow noise -

30 CONTINUED: 30

SONDRA
We don't have a lot of time, Sidney - you know something - if more women are killed and you did nothing when you could have at least tried...

SID
It's all suspicion. We have no real information. It all comes from beyond the grave. I don't like it, I don't like it, this is not for me - this is - I do kid shows, bar mitzvahs -

SONDRA
If we could meet Peter Lyman - at least see him - just to get a look at who we're dealing with.

31 EXT. STREET - DAY 31

Vivian and Sondra walk and talk.

VIVIAN
Peter Lyman? I don't know him personally. Rosemary Kent says that he works in the Jarret Building.

SONDRA
I'd love to get a look at him.

VIVIAN
I've seen pictures of him in the paper. I'm sure you can Google them up. But why?

SONDRA
I'm curious.

VIVIAN
Sondra -

SONDRA
Well the truth is, I'm working on a story about him.

VIVIAN
For who?

SONDRA
Er - well - freelance.

31 CONTINUED: 31

VIVIAN
Obviously, you're keeping something from me but I won't pry. If it's a live look you want, I'm sure you can see him coming out of the Jarret Building any night.

SONDRA
I hear he's good looking.

VIVIAN
His photos don't do him justice.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. JARRET BUILDING - DAY 32

Sid and Sondra outside office building doing surveillance.

SID
This is foolish - we don't even know what the guy looks like.

SONDRA
That's why we're here. I couldn't tell anything from those photos on the computer.

SID
And then what? So we see him live. What are you gonna learn unless he strangles a passerby.

SONDRA
I don't know, Sidney. We'll follow him. I'm improvising.

SID
What the hell am I doing here? I should be home practicing card tricks.

SONDRA
Think of it as adding a little excitement to your life.

SID
Hey, sweetheart - excitement to me is when my laundry comes back.

SONDRA
You got a family?

32 CONTINUED: 32

SID
No. I had a wife but she dumped me if you can believe it.

SONDRA
Somehow -

SID
She said I was a baby who never grew up. I had a great rebuttal and I raised my hand but she would not call on me.

SONDRA
I used to practice the tuba every day.

SID
The tuba? A girl tuba player? It's not very romantic.

SONDRA
I'm just saying I know what it is to practice all day.

SID
You got a boyfriend?

SONDRA
There's always a hitch.

SID
I know what you mean. People always say I'm cynical - but you know what I tell them? Cynical is realistic with an alternate spelling. Clever, huh?

SONDRA
Sometimes I wonder if you can have a career and a love life.

SID
The trick is to balance them - my mother, god rest her soul, managed to be a good wife to my father and she also took in washing.

SONDRA
That's him!

They see a MAN emerge.

SID
He is good looking.

32 CONTINUED: 32

SONDRA
C'mon - let's tail him.

SID
Why?

SONDRA
Anything we can pick up is a lead. I keep telling you - we have to start somewhere.

They follow him. He walks to corner, he hails cab. They hail cab and follow him.

DISSOLVE TO:

33 EXT. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING - DAY 33

He goes into building. They de-cab at same time he enters building. They take positions to wait outside.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 EXT. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING - DAY 34

Sometime later.

SONDRA
What do you think, shrink?

SID
My guess? Matinee with some chick - his mistress.

SONDRA
He's not married.

SID
That's right, if he's a serial killer why does he need extra aggravation.

SONDRA
(gives him a look like he's no genius)
Sidney...here he comes!

The man exits building. He walks down block, they follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

35 EXT. STREETS - DAY 35

Blocks later, he's still walking, they struggle to follow.

35 CONTINUED: 35

SONDRA
What's he up to?

SID
I hope he's going to a restaurant, my blood sugar's flat lining.

DISSOLVE TO:

36 INT. ANTIQUE STORE - DAY 36

He walks into store.

SONDRA
Let's move in closer.

They follow him in. He picks up some item and examines it - perhaps a letter opener or knife. Sondra and Sid exchange worried glances. Suddenly he is greeted by another couple who enter.

MAN
Jerry! How are you. Helen, you know Jerry Burk. He's Lucy's chiropractor.

HELEN
Sure - what are you doing here?

JERRY
I just did a house call - an old woman who completely threw out her back.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. ANTIQUE STORE - DAY 37

Sid and Sondra outside on street.

SID
This is how you follow a guy? He's not Peter Lyman!

SONDRA
I told you, the photos on the computer were not clear.

37 CONTINUED: 37

SID
Darling, may you survive and prosper and grow up to be a wonderful reporter - but without me - I'm hungry - I'm tired, I'm bailing - I'll look for your byline.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY 38

Sondra with Vivian walks and talks.

VIVIAN
I ran into someone who said that Peter Lyman swims at the Governors Club every day.

SONDRA
What's that?

VIVIAN
It's a posh, private club, but my dad's partner is a member - and members are allowed to have guests.

SONDRA
Can I bring someone?

VIVIAN
I'm sure Daddy can arrange it. When do you want to go?

CUT TO:

39 INT. GOVERNOR'S CLUB - DAY 39

Sondra and Sid enter.

SONDRA
(to desk clerk)
We're guests of the Fultons.

SID
We're here to take a dip.

CLERK
Oh yes - the lockers are on the first floor, the pool's on the third..

SONDRA
Has Mr. Lyman come in yet?

39 CONTINUED: 39

CLERK
Yes, he came in a few minutes ago.

SID
What color is his bathing suit?

SONDRA
(pinching him)
Sidney.

SID
You don't want two people in the pool with clashing swim trunks.

CUT TO:

40 INT. GOVERNOR'S CLUB/POOL AREA - DAY 40

Sondra and Sid enter pool area. One or two people are swimming - a woman, an elderly man.

SONDRA
You swim?

SID
Of course not - you have to ask?

SONDRA
They say it's the best exercise.

SID
If I go in my glasses float off my head.

LYMAN enters.

SONDRA
Look - that's him. It has to be.

SID
Let's make sure. I don't want to swim around behind another chiropractor.

As the ELDERLY SWIMMING MAN exits he talks to Peter.

SWIMMER
Peter - Peter!

PETER
Harry, are we on for Friday?

40 CONTINUED: 40

SWIMMER
Yes, I'll be there and I'll teach you a few things about the game of poker.

PETER
I warn you - poker skills run in the Lyman family.

SWIMMER
I'm afraid your tenure as big winner is about to end.

PETER
It'll be an honor to lose to you, old sport.

SWIMMER
(exiting)
Friday right here.

He goes - a lady swims at the far end, off herself.

SONDRA
He is very handsome.

SID
This guy is a serial killer like I play for the New York Jets.

SONDRA
How can we meet him?

SID
Remember, here they have a class system. He's an aristocrat and we're commoners - in fact according to their system we may actually be scum.

SONDRA
You play poker?

SID
Nickel and dime - but who's going to invite me into a game with the son of a Lord - not that I don't come from a long line of very important pushcart peddlers.

SONDRA
This is the time to meet him - we're alone with him.

40 CONTINUED: 40

SID
You're a pretty girl. I could see how he could be attracted to you - especially if he's got a twisted mind.

SONDRA
I can't just march up and start a conversation. I don't want him to be put off or worse, get suspicious.

SID
Drown.

SONDRA
What?

SID
I'll go get a coffee. You get a cramp, flounder, gasp. I'm sure the guy's not going to let you drown and if he does I'll notify your family. Go ahead.

He goes. She's fakes a drowning.

SONDRA
Help! Help! I can't swim! My leg is cramped!

In ad-lib fashion she pretends to drown and Lyman saves her.

SONDRA (CONT'D)
Oh thank you - thank you - I was going under - I panicked. I'm not really a swimmer - I mean I can swim but not very well...

PETER
It's ok - you'll be fine. You should always do a little stretching before you go in. That way you won't cramp.

SONDRA
I haven't been swimming in so long...

PETER
You're a new face. Have you just become a member?

40 CONTINUED: 40

SONDRA
No. I'm just a guest of the Fultons.

PETER
Oh yes - Jack Fulton. Lovely chap. I'm Peter Lyman by the way.

SONDRA
Son-S - Jade - Jade Julliard Spence. Jade Spence.

PETER
(looking at her in a way that's clear he thinks she's pretty)
Oh - pretty name.

SONDRA
The Spences of Palm Beach.

PETER
Not the same Spences who have the shipping line?

SONDRA
No - my father's in - gold and silver - and drilling -- for wells.

PETER
What are you doing in London?

SONDRA
Oh just staying with some friends in Belgravia.

PETER
Are you enjoying your stay?

SONDRA
It's lovely. Although I do find myself with a lot of free time on my hands - but then, I get in some reading - catch up on my Dickens and Thackeray

PETER
What do you do, Jade?

SONDRA
Er - I - I'm an actress - I'm up for the role of Desirée in the new Michael Tinsley movie.

40 CONTINUED: 40

PETER
You're certainly beautiful enough. Have I see you in anything?

SONDRA
It would be my first film. I've done mostly theatre in New York.

PETER
Look, if you're not busy Sunday my dad's giving a garden party in the country. I'd love you to come - I'd be happy to be your date and show you around. The English countryside is lovely this time of year.

SONDRA
How exciting. Can I bring my father?

PETER
Your father?

SONDRA
Oh yes - here he comes.

SID
Hello - I was having a coffee, I thought I heard you drowning. I finished my scone and came immediately.

SONDRA
Dad, this is Peter Lyman, he was kind enough to rescue me.

SID
(looks around)
Dad?... Oh yes - Dad - I yes, she can't swim a stroke - never could- like a lead weight she just sinks to the bottom - it's a family trait - lack of buoyancy - all your siblings have it...

PETER
It's a pleasure to meet you both and I look forward to seeing you on Sunday at the estate.

SID
What's Sunday - not a fox hunt?

40 CONTINUED: 40

SONDRA
I'll explain it Dad.

SID
Yes child.

PETER
I'll leave all the information at the desk.

He goes off.

CUT TO:

41 INT. LAUNDRETTE/CAFE - DAY 41

Sondra and Sid at laundrette/cafe

SONDRA
What kind of idiot are you, not a fox hunt?

SID
I was trying to talk to him on his own level - and thanks for telling him I'm your Dad.

SONDRA
He thinks my name is Jade Spence, so you're Mr. Spence.

SID
What led him to believe your name is Jade Spence?

SONDRA
It's a lot more romantic than Sondra Pransky.

SID
Not to me, I prefer Sondra Pransky.

SONDRA
Well he's not from Brooklyn. He's very British upper crust.

SID
We'll never get away with this. It's too tricky.

41 CONTINUED: 41

SONDRA
For god's sake, your whole life is deception, you're a magician.

SID
Yes, and I like being a magician. I don't want to be sued, deported or jailed for stalking an innocent man. Especially one who's got connections in high places.

SONDRA
Joe Strombel must be on to something if he's going to all this trouble to return. Jesus, it's his last scoop.

SID
What do I care about Joe Strombel? Suddenly I'm taking direction from a hunk of ectoplasm. Strombel's dead, a Pulitzer won't improve his health.

SONDRA
This could really help my career.

SID
You've got your whole life to break big stories. You're still a novice on the Adair Bugle. Or whatever it's called.

SONDRA
Ok, forget it, don't help me. I'll try and do it myself. Go back to your card tricks.

SID
I didn't say I wouldn't help you.

CUT TO:

41 CONTINUED: 41

42 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 42

Sondra at home writing. We hear her VO.

SONDRA (V.O.
(as she writes)
Made contact today with Peter Lyman. Very good looking and charming. Was I flirting with a man who's killed a dozen women? Hard to believe. Striking green? eyes. A man any woman would love to be rescued from drowning by. Introduced Sidney as my father. Perhaps a stupid thing to do but I was trying to think fast and he wasn't believable as my personal trainer. Sidney's not exactly stupid - I can't put my finger on the word to describe him - he's spent a lot of time alone in small town hotel rooms so he's read a lot but he's kind of a weasel. The truth is I'm scared to do this all alone and he's the only one who knows the whole story. ******
******
******

[WT line - Sondra: I'm kind of excited about the garden party.] ******
******

CUT TO:

43 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 43

Sondra and Sid enter, swell garden party in progress.

SONDRA
Look at this place. All that's missing is a moat.

43 CONTINUED: 43

SID
I think I'm overdressed.

He's not.

SONDRA
Here he comes - remember, Jade Spence.

SID
Who?

Peter comes over.

PETER
How are you. Hello Mr. Spence. You look so lovely, Jade.

SONDRA
Thank you. This place is beautiful.

PETER
It's been in the family for years. A little stuffy for my taste.

SID
She said all that's missing is a moat.

Sondra shoots him a look.

PETER
This is my father - Stephen Lyman.

Ad-lib intros.

SONDRA
Oh - Lord Lyman -

SID
Curtsey, go ahead.

SONDRA
I've never met a Lord before -

SID
There was that Earl.

LORD LYMAN
I hope you're enjoying your stay - why don't you show them around, Peter.

43 CONTINUED: 43

PETER
Would you like that?

SONDRA
Charmed, I'm sure.

SID
Shall we get a bite first?

SONDRA
No Dad - I'm dying to see everything, aren't you?

SID
Yes child - yes young daughter...

Montage of them seeing the place, inside and out.

44 INT. LYMAN ESTATE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY 44

Shot of them in grand room.

PETER
This is the Drawing Room.

SONDRA
My goodness, this is really something - isn't it Father?

SID
Quaint.
(runs hand over mantel or tabletop)
Hmmm - I must speak to Epiphany about her dusting...

Sondra can't take much more of Sid and as they walk around she gets a private second with him.

SONDRA
Can you keep quiet and just observe everything and try and remember it.

SID
I have a mnemonic system - I associate the thing I'm trying to remember with an outlandish image - like if I want to remember this ashtray I think of a thousand ashtrays dancing in a meadow -

SONDRA
Ok, ok -

44 CONTINUED: 44

PETER
(portraits)
That was my great grandfather - that's grandfather - and his wife, Lady Hayden -

SID
Reminds me of the portrait of Aunt Hillary over the mantel in the library - game woman - suffragette - diphtheria took her - or was it scurvy?

SONDRA
(wants to kill him)
Let's go, Dad.

CUT TO:

45 INT. LYMAN ESTATE/UPSTAIRS - DAY 45

They are being shown around upstairs.

PETER
This is my room.

SONDRA
(meaningfully to Sid)
You hear that?

SID
Yes my child. You live here all the time?

PETER
Oh no, this is my father's home. Mum passed away. I have a house in town but I come out here frequently.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE/BOAT HOUSE - DAY 46

PETER
Do either of you fish?

SONDRA
I never have.

PETER
I'll teach you.

SID
I've taken some salmon - organic of course.

46 CONTINUED: 46

PETER
Yes, me too - I fly a little. What are your interests, Jade? Do you enjoy concerts? I'm very big on the Philharmonic. We sponsor, I used to play violin badly - I have a wonderful collection. Do either of you play an instrument because we have these lovely music gatherings.

SONDRA
...Well I play the -
(Sidney shakes head, don't tell him this)
...I play the various classics - Shakespeare, Noel Coward...

SID
Yes - we gave her piano lessons as a child but her fingers were just too stubby -

PETER
And you?

SID
I play the Bruce harp - you stick it between your teeth and it makes a twang - it's actually called the Jews harp - but you know how touchy those people are - the slightest hint of anti-Semitism and they write letters.

SONDRA
I'd love you to teach me to fly cast.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE/PRETTY GARDEN - DAY 47

SID
(gadding about, trying to fit in)
Reminds me of Samantha's garden... Samantha's her older sister - great girl - green thumb - brown eyes but green thumb - of course there's the usual sibling rivalry -

Sondra, behind Peter's back, smacks Sid in the head or shoulder to shut him up.

47 CONTINUED: 47

SONDRA
Easy Dad - we don't want to bore Peter.

47 CONTINUED: 47

PETER
Bore me? I'm the opposite of bored. This is my favorite spot. I love to come out here and just sit and read or think.

SONDRA
Yes? And what do you think about?

PETER
Oh life - how sad it can be - how much unnecessary human suffering people bring on themselves - how much better off the world might be if...

SONDRA
If?

PETER
If all the disease and poverty and ugliness could be stamped out. When I'm in Parliament, I have some very innovative ideas about that.

SID
Y'know we never did make it to the buffet table.

SONDRA
Why don't you run along Dad, I'm enjoying the garden.

SID
Won't Mr. Lyman's guests miss him?

PETER
That's ok - I'll sit with your daughter awhile - and it's Peter, Mr. Spence.

SID
(to Sondra)
Of course. If there's still some chicken left would you like a leg or a breast?

SONDRA
(rolling her eyes)
It's ok, Dad.

He goes - they are alone.

47 CONTINUED: 47

PETER
He's very charming - he has a certain humor.

SONDRA
(through clenched teeth)
Yes - everyone says so.

PETER
Your mother must get a great kick out of him.

SONDRA
A great kick - and a real kick - so tell me about yourself Peter. This is all so different for me.

PETER
What do you want to know about me?

SONDRA
Anything you'd care to reveal - aha - your hopes, your dreams...

PETER
I came from a privileged family - it was always decided I'd enter politics one day - my hobbies are polo and I own some race horses. And what are your hopes and dreams?

SONDRA
I like to dance, visit museums, I can cook Chinese food - if you know any great Chinese restaurants... Oh - I've gotten interested in New Age things -

PETER
New Age?

47 CONTINUED: 47

SONDRA
Oh you know - mystical stuff - crystals, astrology, Tarot - are you familiar with any occult phenomena?

PETER
Not really. I'm pretty scientific minded and I find that- What are you staring at?

SONDRA
You have very good enamel.

PETER
Say look, I'd love to take you dancing one night. I'm a good dancer.

SONDRA
That would be great. I'd love it.

PETER
Can I confess something?

SONDRA
Yes?

PETER
I love an American accent and I find so much of what you say very amusing.

SONDRA
I'll take that as a compliment.

PETER
And since you enjoy Chinese restaurants I'll have my new secretary send you a list of all the great ones in town.

SONDRA
Your new secretary?

47 CONTINUED: 47

PETER
Yes, I'm breaking in someone. My previous secretary died - a young woman - suddenly of a blood clot. It was awful.

SONDRA
Really - no prior symptoms? Was there an autopsy?

PETER
No, why would there be an autopsy? Our family doctor knew exactly what it was - a clot on her brain.

SONDRA
Your family doctor - I'm sure you'd trust him - you're probably very close.

PETER
Absolutely, say how'd we get on this morbid subject? So - you never saw a real English garden before...

CUT TO:

48 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 48

Sid with group.

SID
(proffering cards from deck)
Pick a card, go ahead.

CLAIRE
I've got one.

SID
Look at it, put it in your pocket...now tell them your card...

CLAIRE
Six of hearts.

SID
(pulls it from his pocket)
You mean this one?

CLAIRE
But I put that in my pocket -

48 CONTINUED: 48

Pulls card from her pocket - it's a face card - everyone applauds.

SID
You're a great sport - what'd you say your name was? Claire? - God bless you Claire - this is a wonderful group - and I say that sincerely, I must find out who does these hedges - our topiary Moose is starting to look a little shabby around the antlers.

NEVINS
What do you do, Mr. Spence?

SID
Real estate. No, not real estate - oil - I always confuse the two - used to be in real estate but er, land has become so scarce - particularly outdoors. And now if you'll excuse me - I'm just going to hit the little boys. But that poker game would be fun next week... I accept your invitation.

NEVINS
Now that I've seen how good you are with cards, can we trust you? Ha, ha...

Sid goes off to house.

CLAIRE
He is a jokester isn't he? He has that New York humor.

NEVINS
I understand he and his daughter have become friendly with Peter. I like him - he's lively.

DILL
Quite.

CUT BACK TO:

49 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE/PRETTY GARDEN - DAY 49

Peter and Sondra.

PETER
Would I offend you if I told you something?

49 CONTINUED: 49

SONDRA
What?

49 CONTINUED: 49

PETER
You're very different from the women I usually meet.

SONDRA
Is that good or bad?

PETER
I haven't been able to get the vision of you in your swimsuit out of my mind.

SONDRA
I'm glad you liked it. It was marked down.

PETER
That's exactly what I mean. You have a very direct and informal way about you. You take after your father.

SONDRA
Uh-huh.

PETER
You have a very sensual quality - but I'm sure you've been told that.

SONDRA
And I'm sure you've been told you work very fast.

PETER
Am I overbearingly aggressive? I'll stop.

SONDRA
(looks at him, charmed)
Why stop, you're just getting warmed up.

PETER
Are you romantic by nature? I won't say do you believe in love at first sight because that's a cliche - but have you ever had an experience where a bell goes off right away?

SONDRA
We better get back - I have to remind my father to phone in and recharge his pacemaker.

49 CONTINUED: 49

They rise.

CUT TO:

50 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 50

Sid in house. He comes downstairs checking things out. Peter and Sondra enter catching him in the act.

SONDRA
There you are, Father.

SID
Yes child.

SONDRA
They're all buzzing outside about your card tricks.

SID
Oh it was nothing -
(to Peter)
A hobby - conjuring - I remember once at a stag party -

SONDRA
We should be leaving soon, Father.

SID
Nonsense, I'm having fun.

PETER
Did you want something in here? You looked like you were wandering around.

SID
I was just gathering some ideas to give our decorator. My daughter's very fond of English country furniture and we're redoing the house in Palm Beach - looking for a three part desk and maybe a George Stubbs - curious chap Stubbs, more than a touch of the visionary in him.

PETER
There are some marvelous antique stores all around this area.

50 CONTINUED: 50

SID
Capital, capital - maybe we can pick up that comfy chair you always wanted -

CUT TO:

51 INT/EXT. CAR - DAY 51

Sondra and Sid alone in backseat being chauffeured back to London.

SONDRA
I'm going to strangle you if you don't shut up.

SID
Let me tell you what I think regarding this whole serial killer thing.

SONDRA
(gesturing toward driver)
Shh -

SID
He doesn't know what the hell I'm talking about - there is no way this guy could be any serial killer -

SONDRA
Will you be quiet! And quit telling people I sprang from your loins.

SID
The British like that.

SONDRA
And don't keep calling me "child" all the time. They get it, you're my father.

SID
I'm just cementing it.

CUT TO:

52 INT. CAR - DAY 52

Sid and Sondra a little while later.

52 CONTINUED: 52

SONDRA
Well I gotta say - he's lovely. I don't believe he'd be capable of anything remotely bad.

SID
I agree. I don't think he did it. He's just not the serial killer type. I doubt if he's even killed one person.

SONDRA
And yet some very smooth characters have turned out to be secret fiends.

SID
I could tell you liked him.

SONDRA
Well god, he's handsome and rich and fun. He's taking me dancing this week.

SID
Well that's the way to do it. Worm your way in like a beetle and sneak away with whatever crumbs he drops.

SONDRA
Thanks. Did you find anything rummaging around like a bull in a china shop?

SID
(slip of paper)
This.

SONDRA
What's that?
(reads)
Betty G. What is this?

SID
It's a doodle - obviously he doodled the name Betty G. While his mind was on something else -

SONDRA
How do you know it's his?

SID
I took it out of one of his jackets.

52 CONTINUED: 52

SONDRA
Sidney -

SID
I'm trying to make something happen. Right now we're desperate for any tidbit.

SONDRA
Betty G. could be his cleaning woman, his aunt, his travel agent.

SID
Hey - you're gonna give me a hard time when I come up with a clue?

SONDRA
It's not a clue because what the hell does it mean?

SID
Forget it. That's all I could come up with because there are no real clues because the guy didn't do anything - this is a wild goose chase. Now if you're talking about trapping a husband that's one thing, but you're not going to trap a killer.

CUT TO:

53 INT. CLUB - NIGHT 53

Sondra dancing on date with Peter.

CUT TO:

54 EXT. HYDE PARK - FOUNTAIN - DAY 54

Sondra and Peter walk in park.

CUT TO:

55 OMITTED 55

56 INT. GOVERNOR'S CLUB - NIGHT 56

Card game. The men ready to play. Peter is not there yet.

WILSON
Peter called. He's going to be late. He said to start without him.

They play, ad-lib poker.

DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. GOVERNOR'S CLUB - NIGHT 57

Later. Still no Peter - they play - finally Peter enters.

57 CONTINUED: 57

PETER
So sorry chaps - I got sandbagged at the office -

They ad-lib.

PETER (CONT'D)
Who's the big winner? How are you doing Mr. Spence?

SID
Oh, I don't know - in dollars I'm ahead - in pounds I'm losing - Euros I'm even - if we could switch to the yen -

WILSON
Mr. Spence is a good poker player, Peter.

PETER
I might have known.

SID
That's how I bought my first Reubens - poker winnings.

NEVINS
You bought a Rubens painting? They're priceless.

SID
Oh no - not a painting, a sandwich - whose deal?

PETER
I could use a drink.

Ad-libs and they play.

CUT TO:

58 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 58

Sondra on phone from Vivian's.

SONDRA
Did you come up with anything?

CUT TO:

59 INT. SID'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 59

SID
I hardly saw him. He came an hour and a half late - and he said very little - he was tied up on business.

CUT BACK TO:

60 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 60

SONDRA
I've been thinking about it Sidney and I don't think I can go on with this deception. He's a sweet, trusting guy.

CUT BACK TO:

61 INT. SID'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 61

SID
I believe you're right, child.

CUT BACK TO:

62 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 62

SONDRA
Did he say anything about me?

CUT BACK TO:

63 INT. SID'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 63

SID
Not much but don't worry I talked about you - what a bright kid you were - good natured - first in your class - trouble in your early years, a bed wetter - but we took you to specialists - for awhile your mother thought you were dyslexic -

CUT BACK TO:

64 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 64

SONDRA
(to herself as she hangs up)
God help me.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. STREET - DAY 65

Sondra and Vivian walk and talk.

SONDRA
He asked me if I believed in love at first sight. He's very naive. It's sweet.

VIVIAN
I hope you told him yes.

SONDRA
I've told him over and over we really have nothing in common - we have totally different backgrounds - but I think that's something he likes.

VIVIAN
How about the story you're doing on him? What is that all about?

SONDRA
I'm too emotional to be a good reporter - I'm all screwed up - I just hope when I come clean to him, which I'll have to eventually, everything won't come crashing down.

Sondra passes newsstand on street. Headline read: Tarot Killer Kills Again.

She is stunned. She buys all the papers.

CUT TO:

66 INT. SID'S HOTEL LOBBY - DAY 66

Sid's rotten hotel lobby. They are scanning all the papers.

SID
(reads)
Mary Thompson, a prostitute was strangled on Bunting Road last night at approximately nine thirty.

66 CONTINUED: 66

SONDRA
(reads)
Next to the body of the short haired brunette prostitute was the Hangman card from the Tarot deck. What time did Peter get to the card game last night?

66 CONTINUED: 66

SID
If you're asking, could he have strangled someone and then shown up to play poker, the answer is absolutely.

SONDRA
I don't believe it.

SID
He seemed cheerful when he came in. But he did say he needed a drink. If he did just kill somebody it didn't affect his poker game - he bluffed me out with two sixes - of course my full house was low.

SONDRA
We have to pursue this Sidney - it's too coincidental.

SID
He said he had to work late at the office. Funny, one of the guys phoned him there and got no answer.

SONDRA
And another woman is dead.

SID
I know - the story's awful. She's hooking to support a kid and some crazy knocks her off.

SONDRA
I can't let my feelings get in the way. We've got to probe deeper.

SID
Meaning.

SONDRA
Meaning we've seen his parent's house - we've met some of his social circle - I'd like to have a look around his house.

SID
Where does he live?

66 CONTINUED: 66

SONDRA
In town. He's never taken me home but I think the time has come.

SID
You'd make love to him just to gather information?

SONDRA
To be honest, I was looking forward to making love with him.

SID
As your father I have to object. This is no way to do journalism. And - what happens if you fall hopelessly in love.

SONDRA
I can handle myself.

SID
Right - like we followed the wrong man for blocks - don't sleep with the wrong man. And be careful.

CUT TO:

67 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT 67

Sondra and Peter in a ritzy, candlelight restaurant.

PETER
You look very beautiful by candlelight.

SONDRA
Every time I drink it goes right to my head and yet I always drink.

PETER
I've had a great time showing you around London. It's made my summer.

SONDRA
I've loved every minute of it.

PETER
Do you like London as much as New York?

67 CONTINUED: 67

SONDRA
It's much more relaxed - more civilized - although I was concerned about all this in the press about the Tarot Card Killer.

PETER
Yes, the police seem no match for him.

SONDRA
What type of mind does such a thing?

PETER
Intriguing, isn't it?

SONDRA
Is it?

PETER
I'm very fascinated with this case - everyone is - the incredible imagination of certain criminals is mind boggling. And remember, we know mostly about the ones who are caught. There are probably many who commit crimes so skillfully no one knows anything's happened.

SONDRA
You mean to say, everyone thinks the victim died of natural causes when she was actually poisoned.

PETER
Er yes - why did you think of that particular one?

SONDRA
Well that's one example -

PETER
I suppose.

SONDRA
But the kind of man that would kill over and over and leave a Tarot card.

PETER
It is rather theatrical.

67 CONTINUED: 67

SONDRA
You think the killer's an actor?

PETER
My own theory is that he's a man who hates women, possibly because his mother traumatized him somehow - and prostitutes symbolize women using feminine wiles to exploit men's sexual vulnerability.

SONDRA
So you have given the matter a lot of thought.

PETER
Everyone has his theory about the Tarot Card Killer. The scary thing is he could be anyone amongst us - sitting next to us at the theatre - or right here.

SONDRA
I'm a little drunk.

PETER
You become very affectionate when you've had too much to drink. It's nice.

SONDRA
What are you thinking?

PETER
That I've wanted to make love to you from the first moment I set eyes on you.

SONDRA
Who am I to say no? You did save my life.

PETER
You can say no.

SONDRA
But why would I?

CUT TO:

68 INT/EXT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 68

Sondra and Peter entering his big home in London.

68 CONTINUED: 68

SONDRA
Um - you must do a lot of entertaining.

PETER
I'm embarrassed to say I do. Do you think I'm an empty socialite? Much of it's political.

SONDRA
(a tad high)
I think you're just swell. Can I see the place?

CUT TO:

69 INT. PETER'S HOME/DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT 69

Montage. He shows her a few rooms.

PETER
My gym - my wine cellar - Let me show you my collection.

He opens the locked door to his music room filled with antique instruments, scores and music stands.

PETER
This is a Guarneri, that's an early Flugal Horn, that's a Stradavarius, the room is climate controlled.

SONDRA
And you play these violins?

PETER
Oh God no - but I lend them out - they need to be played.

SONDRA
These old instruments are very romantic.

PETER
Shall I show you my bedroom?

CUT TO:

70 INT. STAGE SHOW - NIGHT 70

Sid as Splendini on stage. He is doing the spirit cabinet.

70 CONTINUED: 70

SID
If you'll just step this way - enter the DeMaterializer - let's hear it for Miss Wendy Beamish.

Volunteer enters.

SID (CONT'D)
Occult spirits emerge - help us dematerialize the molecules of Wendy Beamish. I can feel the disintegrating power now - are you ok darling?
(MORE)

70 CONTINUED: 70

SID (CONT'D)
Feel your body coming apart? Don't worry - I'll make you whole again - if I can find all the parts.

He opens cabinet - she's gone but Strombel is there. The audience applauds.

JOE
(to Sid who half closes door, playing audience and spirit)
Remember this number - left 16, right 21, left 12

SID
What? What?

Playing both Strombel and audience for applause.

JOE
(sotto to Sid)
Left 16, right 21, left 12.

SID
16, 21, 12...

Strombel fades, Sid slams cabinet - makes pass - opens it - woman is back.

SID
She's ok! God bless you darling - left 16, right 21, left 12 - 16 big blue horses, 21 jet airplanes turning right, 12 midgets spinning left...

CUT TO:

71 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 71

Peter and Sondra in bed after sex.

PETER
That was as great as I imagined it would be... You look pensive.

SONDRA
No - I'm just - confused.

PETER
Women after lovemaking. Always so complicated.

SONDRA
I'm not complicated - um - I love your aftershave.

71 CONTINUED: 71

PETER
Yardley - it was the first I used at 16 and I've never changed - I'm a very loyal soul - and what makes you smell so sweet?

SONDRA
Oh, just some fragrance.

Peter bounds out of bed.

SONDRA
Where you going?.

PETER
Let's celebrate our first love-making with champagne. I'll get some.

He's robed and goes downstairs.

She slips out of bed and prowls the room snooping. Anything she finds is benign, even sweet, a book of poems, a boyhood photo of him.

CUT TO:

72 INT. PETER'S HOME/KITCHEN TO STAIRS - NIGHT 72

Peter heads upstairs with champagne and glasses.

CUT BACK TO:

73 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 73

Sondra is going through the photos and she finds one of his mother. She has short cut, brunette hair. He enters and she doesn't see him.

PETER
That's my mother.

SONDRA
She's quite attractive.

PETER
(Opening Champagne)
She was very beautiful. And quite difficult.

73 CONTINUED: 73

SONDRA
In what way difficult?

PETER
Unfaithful. Say - can you stay over - nothing would please me more.

SONDRA
I'd love to but I can't.

PETER
Oh - why not?

SONDRA
Er my father's a bit under the weather.

PETER
Nothing serious.

SONDRA
Er tooth problems - there's some tenderness in lower seven. I really should go.

CUT TO:

74 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 74

Vivian and Sondra.

VIVIAN
So you went to bed with him? Was it fabulous?

SONDRA
It was pretty wonderful, yes. He made me forget that I had other things on my mind.

VIVIAN
My god, like what?

SONDRA
Like it's not fair because I've told him a lot of lies and it makes me feel rotten but god, he swept me off my feet.

74 CONTINUED: 74

VIVIAN
I never understood what kind of story you're writing on him and for who, but I'm sure when you want to you'll tell me.

SONDRA
Let's just say it's not a flattering piece.

VIVIAN
But who's paying you? The tabloids? And why you? You're a visiting student - they've got their own people -

SONDRA
Oh Vivian, Vivian, don't ask. I'm so conflicted.

VIVIAN
Who was better in bed, the movie director Mike Tinsley or Peter Lyman?

SONDRA
Hey, what am I, a sexual Zagat Guide? Let's just say Tinsley's fare was good but simple - Peter's service was better and he has a great tasting menu.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. THE MITRE PUB - DAY 75

Sondra and Sid at some nice exterior location so they can talk.

SID
I'm telling you - he appeared - I was doing the effect with some Manchester chick, she looked like Sitting Bull and she vanishes according to plan and there's Strombel. What a hand I got. The house went ape.

SONDRA
What'd he say.

SID
The whole thing was ten seconds and he faded - he gave me the combination to a safe. What safe I don't know.

75 CONTINUED: 75

SONDRA
I didn't see any safe.

SID
So you didn't come away with anything besides a possible pregnancy?

SONDRA
Just the picture of his mother. She's a short haired brunette. Lady Eleanor.

SID
But not a hooker.

SONDRA
No Sidney, I hardly think so. She was practically royalty. Christ you amaze me sometimes, your brain - but she was unfaithful.

SID
Why are you getting so upset?

SONDRA
Because I don't like the feel of this whole thing.

SID
Because you'd like to believe he's innocent.

SONDRA
Is that so terrible?

SID
But Joe Strombel says he's a serial killer.

SONDRA
Ok, ok - I'm trying not to let personal feelings interfere with work.

SID
This guy must be some lover. For you to want your big scoop to peter out. I must find out what after shave lotion he uses.

75 CONTINUED: 75

SONDRA
Hey, what am I talking about - there's a combination that opens the room where he keeps all of those priceless musical instruments.

75 CONTINUED: 75

SID
Okay, now you're talking.

SONDRA
I wouldn't mind having a closer look around that room - you have the combination?

SID
(tapping his breast pocket)
Yeah but we can't break and enter into a guy's locked room. He's the son of a Lord - they'll take us to the Tower of London and behead us.

SONDRA
We have to wait for the right moment. We need a plan.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE - GARDEN - DAY 76

Sondra and Peter stroll through the garden- romantic fun.

CUT TO:

77 INT. ART GALLERY - DAY 77

Sondra and Peter at art gallery.

CUT TO:

78 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 78

Sondra comes home. Vivian greets her. Flowers.

78 CONTINUED: 78

SONDRA
Hi.

VIVIAN
Guess what?

SONDRA
What?

VIVIAN
Peter Lyman sent you these flowers. I assume you told him your name is Jade Spence. Naturally I accepted for you.

SONDRA
Yes, I'm Jade Spence. Oh Vivian.
(reads note)
He's so sweet - there's a big party he's giving next Saturday night. I'm going to have to buy a dress.

VIVIAN
He certainly seems smitten with you.

SONDRA
If he's smitten with anyone it's Jade Spence.

VIVIAN
Who is Jade Spence?

SONDRA
A would be investigative journalist who falls in love with the object of her investigation.

CUT TO:

79 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 79

Sondra writing alone.

SONDRA (V.O.)
(as she writes)
I've really messed up. There are only tantalizing hints that Peter could be the man known as the Tarot Killer - but my instinct tells me it isn't true. As I say, there is nothing substantial - just tidbits and scraps that add up to nothing provable.
(MORE)

79 CONTINUED: 79

SONDRA (V.O.) (cont'd)
I can't seem to stop the investigation but I don't want to find out the truth if it's bad. What would Joe Strombel do?

We hear Joe's voice and then we see him.

JOE
To me, all that mattered was getting the truth - there's no feeling like breaking a real big story - beating everybody to the punch with some electrifying scoop.

SONDRA
But I can't seem to pry up any conclusive evidence.

JOE
But you have to make sacrifices. I gave up a lot to bounce around the world and risk my life to get the inside dope. I had to pass on a woman I loved and who loved me. Did I ever regret it? Maybe some nights. Still -

SONDRA
What am I not doing right?

JOE
You're doing fine - you have to follow up every little lead, every clue, improvise, tap dance, fake, snoop, stick with it - just remember you're trying to unmask the guy - not undress him -
(he fades)
Good luck...

He's gone.

SONDRA
(calling to him)
Isn't it just possible that you're following the wrong lead here?

CUT TO:

80 EXT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 80

Establisher. *****

CUT TO:

81 INT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 81

Party in progress.

Shot of Peter, Sondra by his side - he's introducing her to people - high class affair.

A waiter offers tray of champagne.

CUT TO:

82 INT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 82

Sid chatting with some group.

SID
You thinking of a card?

BUSBY
Yes.

SID
Seven of spades?

BUSBY
Amazing. How do you do that?

SID
It's just a little hobby. I wish I could devote more practice to it - but er - the oil wells take up so much of one's time.

JOAN
(looking across room to Sondra)
Your daughter's very beautiful.

SID
Yes, she's lovely. Overcame a great handicap. She was learning disabled for years - we provided the best specialists - now she's practically normal.

JOAN
She's a charmer.

SID
God bless you sweetheart - what sign are you? Don't tell me - are you Aries? Right?
(to Mr. Charlton)
If you had a necktie and scissors I could show you a great little stunt.

82 CONTINUED: 82

Sondra begs off Peter and collects Sid.

SONDRA
Dad, can I speak with you a minute?

SID
I was just going to make some coins come out of Mrs. Quincy's nose.

SONDRA
(grabbing him secretly but forcefully leading him off)
Dad -

SID
Excuse me - yes precious offspring...

They are alone.

SONDRA
Can you resist doing those nitwit tricks? You're supposed to be a dignified businessman.

SID
I told 'em it was just a hobby, the hobby of a rich merchant...

SONDRA
Go downstairs and open the music room door. I'll join you as soon as possible. You have the combination?

SID
Actually, I left it in my other jacket.

SONDRA
Oh Jesus - well you have to go home and get it.

SID
It's at the cleaners - but don't worry my mnemonic system - I never forget anything.

SONDRA
Go ahead, hurry.

82 CONTINUED: 82

PETER
(comes up to them)
There you are. I hope you're enjoying yourself Mr. Spence.

SID
Yes - fantastic - Sondra will tell you, I enjoy big parties. Once a year I throw a masked ball at the country club. It's great fun. We give out noisemakers.

82 CONTINUED: 82

SONDRA
(pulling him away)
Come Peter - let's get some more champagne.

They go off. Follow Sid who wends his way downstairs.

83 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 83

Sid starts working on the combination.

SID
10 blue horses - 12 jet planes right - no - the spinning midgets.

CUT TO:

84 INT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 84

Upstairs, Sondra is socializing.

CUT TO:

85 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 85

Sid struggling with the combination.

SID
12 midgets - 8 hens a laying - no -

CUT BACK TO:

86 INT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 86

Sondra upstairs beginning to get antsy looking for Sid who doesn't appear. She is in ad-lib conversation.

86A INT. PETER'S HOME. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT. 86A

Sid opens the door.

SID
Eureka!

Sid enters music room and snoops around, Servant notices the door ajar, closes it, locking Sid in.

86B INT. PETER'S HOME. - NIGHT. 86B

Peter is called away, he excuses himself.

Sondra then excuses herself and then goes downstairs.

87 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 87

Sondra goes to music room and looks around, she hears someone inside scratching around.

SONDRA
Sidney? Is that you?

CUT BACK TO:

88 INT. PETER'S HOME/INT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 88

SID
(inside)
I'm locked in.

CUT BACK TO:

89 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 89

SONDRA
Oh Christ.

She tries the door to no avail.

SONDRA
What's the combination?

SID (V.O.)
Wait - 8 midgets - no - 6 French hens.

A servant enters.

SERVANT
There you are, Miss Spence. Mr. Lyman is looking for you. He has someone he'd like to introduce you to before he leaves.

Takes her off.

CUT BACK TO:

90 OMITTED 90

91 OMITTED 91

92 INT. PETER'S HOME/INT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 92

SID
(inside)
I've got it. Left 16, right 21, left 12 - hurry up kid it's getting stuffy in here.

CUT TO:

93 INT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 93

Sondra upstairs saying good night to special friends of Peter's.

SONDRA
It was lovely meeting you - charmed - I love your earrings - I was noticing them - and your bite - good bite.

PETER
(taking her off to dance floor)
Come - we haven't danced once.

93 CONTINUED: 93

They dance and he nuzzles her romantically.

CUT BACK TO:

94 INT. PETER'S HOME/INT + EXT MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 94

A servant crosses.

SID
Sondra? Midgets, left 16 - right 21 - jet planes left 12. Are you reading me?

CUT BACK TO:

95 INT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 95

Sondra dancing.

SONDRA
Excuse me - I'll be right back.

She goes as Peter melds into another group.

Sondra goes downstairs.

CUT TO:

96 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 96

Sondra taps at door.

SID (V.O.)
Did you get it?

SONDRA
Get what?

SID (V.O.)
The lock.

SONDRA
What's the combination?

SID (V.O.)
Left 16, right 21, left 12.

She opens door.

SID
Thank God, for a minute, I thought I was going to be one of those skeletons they find when they sell the house.

They look around and everything looks normal.

SONDRA
Be careful, this stuff is priceless.

96 CONTINUED: 96

SID
I knew a guy who could play 'Flight of the Bumblebee' while immersed in a tub of jello.

CUT TO:

96 CONTINUED: 96

97 INT. PETER'S HOME - NIGHT 97

Back upstairs.

PETER
(to servant)
Did you see Miss Spence?

SERVANT
I thought I saw her going downstairs.

PETER
(thinking it's odd)
Downstairs?

CUT TO:

98 INT. PETER'S HOME/INT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 98

SID
This is a wild goose chase.

98 CONTINUED: 98

SONDRA
Someone's coming.

They rush to straighten up and exit the music room.

CUT TO:

99 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 99

Peter coming upon them after they've exited the music room.

PETER
Jade - I was searching for you.
The guests will be leaving soon.

SONDRA
I was just showing my father the house - he loves English homes.

SID
Fine house - superb basement - just checking to see if all the traps had fresh cheese.

PETER
(sotto to Sondra)
Can you stay the night?

SONDRA
I wish I could but my father...

PETER
On come on - he'll be driven home.

SONDRA
I shouldn't -

PETER
You look so ravishing - I can't let you go.

CUT TO:

100 INT/EXT. ROLLS ROYCE - NIGHT 100

Sid being driven home alone.

CUT TO:

101 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 101

Sondra and Peter asleep in bed. She is awake, thinking.

101 CONTINUED: 101

She makes sure he's asleep. He is. She gets out and tip toes out of the room.

En route to the music room, she finds newspaper clippings about the Tarot Card Killer. ******

CUT TO:

101A OMITTED 101A

101B OMITTED 101B

101C OMITTED 101C

101D OMITTED 101D

101E OMITTED 101E

102 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT + INT MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 102

We intercut shots of him asleep but restive. She enters the music room.

She searches knocking over something loud. Finally about to give up, she replaces an old horn and from the bell, stuff comes out.

CUT BACK TO:

103 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 103

Peter turning restively and awakes.

CUT BACK TO:

104 INT. PETER'S HOME/INT. MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT 104

Sondra discovers clippings of the killings. Underneath is a tarot deck.

CUT BACK TO:

105 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM/HALL/BATHROOM - NIGHT 105

Peter looking down the hall for her. He looks in bathroom.

She finally enters bedroom and he surprises her.

PETER
Jade -

SONDRA
Oh - you scared me.

PETER
It's four a.m. I heard a clang.

SONDRA
I was in the kitchen.
(she produces glass of milk)
I couldn't sleep. I thought maybe some warm milk.
(drinks it)

PETER
Can I ask you something?

SONDRA
Yes?

PETER
Would you consider not going home when the summer ends?

She stares at him.

CUT TO:

106 EXT. STREET - HEADING TO LAUNDRETTE - DAY 106

Sid and Sondra talking.

106 CONTINUED: 106

SID
I don't know what more proof you need.

SONDRA
Lots of people own Tarot cards.

SID
But they don't hide them in a French Horn. Plus the clippings of the murders - what does this guy do, save his reviews?

SONDRA
What would we tell the police? He's got a Tarot deck? It's no crime. He was late for a poker game? I'm sure he's smart enough to have an alibi. And what are we left with? His mother had short cut brunette hair? Jesus - if we blow the whistle on him and can't make it stick and if he's innocent -

SID
I know, I know - then he realizes you're a dishonest little opportunist who's been playing him for a fool and he writes you off.

SONDRA
I'm just saying in order to actually make accusations against someone we need proof. Especially Lord Lyman's son.

SID
It doesn't have to be a formal accusation... Just an anonymous tip.

SONDRA
You know how many crank tips the papers said the police get? You're going to call one in against Peter Lyman? They'll hang up on you in mid sentence. Besides, if it's true, I want to break the story... You know what Joe Strombel said - get it first - but first get it right

CUT TO:

107 INT. RESTRAURANT - NIGHT 107

Vivian and family at restaurant with Sondra. It is Sondra's birthday and they're taking her out. They give her a few small gifts, ad-libs.

VIVIAN
Happy birthday.

SONDRA
Oh - this is so nice of you and so unnecessary.
(opens something, then aside to Vivian)
I wanted to ask your father a question. If I wanted to speak privately and confidentially to a good newspaper editor, does he know of one?

VIVIAN
I'm sure he does and I'm sure he'd be too happy to help.

SONDRA
Thanks.

CUT TO:

108 EXT. HYDE PARK - DAY 108

He presents her with a gift.

PETER
Happy birthday. You look so sullen.

SONDRA
I always get sad at birthdays.

PETER
I know what you mean - although I think we're still both young enough to look forward to the presents.

SONDRA
(opens gift, a pin for example)
Oh god, it's lovely.

PETER
(she tries pinning it on, he helps)
Here, let me.

108 CONTINUED: 108

SONDRA
You really shouldn't have.

PETER
I wanted to.
(kiss)
Where were you during that kiss?

SONDRA
What do you mean?

PETER
You were a million miles away.

SONDRA
Can I ask you a question? ******

PETER
Yes. ******

SONDRA
When I was at your house I ******
couldn't help noticing you had ******
clipped out some newspaper ******
accounts of the Tarot killings. ******

PETER
Oh, did I leave them around? I ******
thought I had put them in my ******
desk. As we once discussed, I am ******
fascinated by the case - I asked ******
my secretary to keep me abreast - ******
I don't buy the tabloids. Hey, ******
you have tears in your eyes. ******

SONDRA
My nasal passages become ******
congested when I'm sad.

PETER
Well don't be sad. It's your
birthday. I'd like to celebrate
tonight, but I have to go out of
town for a few days.

SONDRA
Oh?

PETER
I have some business to take care
of.

108 CONTINUED: 108

SONDRA
Thank you for this. I'll think of you when I wear it.

CUT TO:

109 INT. THEATRE/BACK STAGE - DAY 109

SID
I didn't know it was your birthday. I'll take you for a magnificent dinner tonight. You like Chicken McNuggets? Or what about Indian food? It's spicy.

SONDRA
I don't have much of an appetite.

SID
You will when they bring out the prawns in hydrochloric acid. Your mind's on Peter, right?

SONDRA
I wouldn't be surprised if one day he asked me to marry him.

SID
Is your family orthodox or will they accept a serial killer?

CUT TO:

110 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 110

Sondra at Vivian's sprucing up. She is in front of the mirror primping.

VIVIAN
That's an expensive present from Peter. The Lyman's are so wealthy.

SONDRA
Yes, it was very extravagant of him.

VIVIAN
(going into shower)
I better hurry and get dressed. I still haven't found my own gorgeous millionaire.

SONDRA
(into mirror)
Oh Sondra - what a mess...

110 CONTINUED: 110

Joe Strombel appears in mirror.

JOE
It's starting to add up against him. The bits and scraps are coming together.

SONDRA
It's circumstantial junk. A coincidence here and there.

JOE
I told you not to fall for the guy. Believe me, I've been down this road many times and there's too much smoke not to be fire.

SONDRA
I'm sure you've been wrong plenty of times too.

JOE
I'm not wrong here although I do agree you don't have enough to pull the trigger yet. If you act prematurely not only does he walk but your professional credibility's wrecked - sometimes for good.

SONDRA
You'd love it if he was guilty, wouldn't you, so you can have your last big scoop.

JOE
(fading)
This is my last big scoop - yes - it is -

SONDRA
I wish you'd fade for good. Get out of my life. I don't want to see you anymore. I'm not suited to this kind of work. I should be flossing molars for a living.

CUT TO:

111 INT. INDIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT 111

SID
You can't beat the bread. I could eat nothing but bread.

111 CONTINUED: 111

SONDRA
If I ate that much bread I'd put on twenty pounds.

SID
I never gain weight. I have too much anxiety and it works like aerobics.

SONDRA
It's very nice of you to take me out for my birthday.

SID
That's ok, you're the daughter I never had. No, I'm kidding. I never wanted kids - you feed 'em and clothe 'em and take care of them and they grow up and accuse you of having Alzheimer's.

SONDRA
What was your wife like?

SID
Like the protagonist in The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich.

SONDRA
And she left you?

SID
I knew the marriage was going to break up because she kept rejecting me sexually but I need more than that from a person.

SONDRA
Were you upset?

SID
I wept. I fell on the floor when she told me she was moving out. I rolled around and screamed and cursed and spit but interestingly I never lost my dignity.

SONDRA
What are you going to do when your engagement is up in London?

SID
I have some very lucrative possibilities in Reykjavik and I'm doing two weeks in Guinea-Bissau.

(MORE)

111 CONTINUED: 111

SID (cont'd)
No, I'm kidding - I don't need much in life - just health, happiness, contentment, wealth...

CUT TO:

112 EXT. INDIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT 112

Sondra and Sid strolling after dinner, same area.

SONDRA
Could you ever live in London?

SID
I love London, everything about it, but it would be hard for me to live here.

SONDRA
Why?

SID
Apart from the language difference, I can't get used to driving on the other side of the street. I'm always sure I'm going to kill myself in a crash.

Suddenly she spies something.

SONDRA
Sidney!

SID
What? What?

SONDRA
There's Peter!

POV - Peter getting out of a cab, he walks.

They follow.

SID
You said he was out of town.

SONDRA
That's what he told me.

SID
You think he's got another chick on the side? He says he's crazy about you but is really drawn to her sexually.

SONDRA
Thanks Sidney.

112 CONTINUED: 112

SID
Why isn't he using his chauffeur?

SONDRA
I guess he wants whatever he's up to, to be secret.

Shot of them following him. We plan it so in some nice way they lose him.

At it's simplest a bus could come between them and Peter's vanished.

DISSOLVE TO:

113 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 113

Later, Sid and Sondra wandering futilely.

SONDRA
How could we have lost him? He was right under our noses.

SID
I think it's time we gave up. It's midnight already.

SONDRA
He lied to me.

SID
Maybe he's got some personal business that he's ashamed of - maybe he's a cross-dresser - maybe he likes to do folk dancing.

SONDRA
It's probably something that when he explains it will make us seem foolish for not trusting him.

SID
Yeah. Not everything's sinister. Just most things.

SONDRA
I feel a little sick from the Indian food.

SID
Really - you hardly touched your cobra.

Suddenly they hear the scream of a woman.

113 CONTINUED: 113

SCREAMER
Help! Police! A woman's been strangled! Help!

A small group of pedestrians gather and we hear ad-libs like:

PEDESTRIAN
It's him - they found a Tarot card!

FEMALE PEDESTRIAN
She lives in this neighborhood. It's the Tarot Killer.

Sid and Sondra drink it in and are stunned.

CUT TO:

114 INT. SID'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY 114

Next day. Sid and Sondra pouring over papers at his ratty hotel room.

SID
(reads)
Elizabeth Gibson, known to be a prostitute found dead on Baldwin Street.

SONDRA
We should have gone to the police earlier.

SID
You said they'd never have believed us.

SONDRA
They still won't just arrest him. Just because he was in the neighborhood. They'd have to have real proof - a fingerprint, DNA. And they're not going to haul Lord Lyman's son in just on our say so.

SID
But he owns a Tarot deck - which he hides - his mother has the short cut black hair - I know. When I hear myself saying it I see myself grabbing on to the lapels of the police chief like a crazy.

114 CONTINUED: 114

SONDRA
I think the time has come to show what I've been writing to a real newspaperman.

SID
By real you mean -

SONDRA
One that's living. Vivian's father has a friend at the Times. Funny, I finally meet a terrific, rich, eligible guy who's nuts about me - my parents would like him except for the murder part.

CUT TO:

115 INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 115

Sondra writing alone.

SONDRA (V.O.)
(as she writes)
A tip from an undisclosed source first aroused suspicion that the Tarot card serial killer might be Peter Lyman, the handsome, charming son of Lord Stephen Lyman. This anonymous tip prompted an impromptu investigation that included subterfuge and personal encounters of the most intimate nature. The result: there is every reason to believe Peter Lyman is indeed the man authorities are looking for.

CUT TO:

116 INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY 116

Mr. Malcolm an editor has finished reading the piece. Sid and Sondra sit opposite.

MALCOLM
(puts down manuscript)
It's very vivid and rather shocking. And there are some genuine circumstantial bits of evidence but let me give you a lesson in professional journalism. No newspaper should or would ever run this story.

116 CONTINUED: 116

SONDRA
Why not?

MALCOLM
It would be fatally irresponsible and libelous. All you have here are a number of titillating speculations. Very flamboyant theories that tarnish a man and a well known figure at that - without a single shred of substantial proof. So his mother was a short haired brunette. So he came late for a poker game and he said he was going away on a business trip and he got caught lying.

SID
But who has a Tarot deck hidden in a French Horn? *******

MALCOLM
It's not against the law to own a Tarot deck and keep it anyplace you like. You'd look pretty foolish in court with your accusations. And that's where you'd wind up because he'd have no choice but to sue you and the newspaper - and he'd win.

SONDRA
And to go to the police?

MALCOLM
I'll come to that but first let me continue my tedious professorial lecture. Vivian's dad and I go way back and he said you were a journalism student. You talk about getting a tip - ok, you won't disclose your source - but what you've done is let your imagination run wild.

SONDRA
Suppose I told you Joe Strombel gave us the tip?

116 CONTINUED: 116

MALCOLM
The late Joe Strombel? You mean before he died he gave a student reporter a major story and didn't follow it up himself?

SID
We never said it was before he died.

MALCOLM
What?

SONDRA
He died before he could follow it up.

MALCOLM
Why did he give it to you - he didn't know he was dying? I don't buy it. I knew Joe Strombel well and if he had had a lead he considered reliable he would certainly have pursued it himself - from the grave if necessary.

SONDRA
But Peter was in the area of the crime scene the night of the murder.

MALCOLM
I realize as a student how exciting it must have been to think you might be on to something so spectacular.

SID
She is on to something - this girl is a bloodhound. Any tabloid would pay through the nose for this scoop.

MALCOLM
Now that I've preached on the realities of accurate reporting, I want to show you how catastrophic for everybody involved it would have been if you had say, brought the results of your investigation to a tabloid. Today, the police have apprehended the Tarot card serial killer and it most assuredly is not Peter Lyman.

116 CONTINUED: 116

SONDRA
What?

MALCOLM
Every paper in town is going to press with it as we speak. It was a handyman named Henry Banks who has confessed. Banks is a delusional paranoid whose given Scotland Yard information that only the killer could possibly know. He's led police to two additional bodies and his DNA and a fingerprint they found check out. I know this puts a crimp in your scoop but Henry Banks is the Tarot Killer, not Lord Lyman's son.

CUT TO:

117 EXT. STREET - DAY 117

Sid and Sondra hold papers carrying the news.

SONDRA
Well I can't say I'm not walking on air.

SID
Boy I'd like to catch that Joe Strombel. I'd kill him.

SONDRA
I only hope Peter will forgive me.

SID
For what?

SONDRA
I've got to tell him the truth. I'm not Jade Spence - I'm a duplicitous, ambitious, pushy student from a small college who lied to him over and over.

SID
He lied to you too.

SONDRA
I'm sure his will pale in comparison to the enormity of what I've done.

117 CONTINUED: 117

SID
Why don't you marry him and don't say anything. You could be Jade Spence forever.

SONDRA
I don't want to have to keep getting you a Father's Day present every year.

SID
I think the time has come to tell you, you were adopted. We wanted a handicapped child and there you were.

SONDRA
It serves me right. I'm getting what I deserved. If he hates me who could blame him.

SID
I know I'd be furious -

SONDRA
Thanks Sidney. Always with the support.

CUT TO:

118 EXT. LYMAN'S ESTATE - DAY 118

Sondra out with Peter.

PETER
I thought you'd like it here.

SONDRA
Peter, I have a confession to make.

PETER
So do I.

SONDRA
Me first -

PETER
No - mine has been bothering me all day. When I told you I was going away on business I was lying.

SONDRA
I know you were.

118 CONTINUED: 118

PETER
How?

SONDRA
I saw you.

PETER
No.

SONDRA
I had just come from dinner.

PETER
With your father?

SONDRA
Er -

PETER
The truth is a company my father owns is about to merge with a company in the Middle East - it's a highly sensitive situation - the less anyone knows about it, the better - we do not want the press to sniff this out prematurely... I'm very sorry for the extreme secrecy.

SONDRA
(happy)
I don't want to know. It's your business.

PETER
So your father took you for a birthday dinner and you saw me. How unnerving. The thing I hate most in the world is lying.

SONDRA
Er Peter -

PETER
Yes Jade -

SONDRA
Peter -

PETER
Yes -? What is it you want to tell me?

SONDRA
Sit down.

118 CONTINUED: 118

PETER
I am sitting.

SONDRA
Maybe you better lie down.

PETER
There's nothing you could tell me that -

SONDRA
My name is not Jade Spence.

PETER
It's not?

SONDRA
It's Sondra Pransky. My father is not my father - he's Sidney Waterman, a magician named Splendini. I'm a journalism student. Don't ask me what crazy misinformation made us think you were the Tarot Killer and remember, I didn't know you at all - so I decided to investigate the tip. After I got to know you I realized the story couldn't possibly be true. Now the police have him and it's over. And of course, along the route I fell for you. I completely understand if you never want to see me again. I deserve it for listening to -

PETER
Who? Who told you this?

SONDRA
A newspaperman - now deceased - he was foolish, very eager for one last scoop. I got carried away - I guess I blew everything.

PETER
Miss Pransky - not only am I not angry with you but you made my day. Suspecting that I could be such an imaginative, dramatic, fiend. I love it. It's one of the funniest, craziest things I've ever heard. I can't wait to tell it at the club.

118 CONTINUED: 118

SONDRA
Oh don't Peter - I'm so embarrassed.

PETER
Now that we've confessed our sins to one another - can we open the champagne and move on with our lives? I want to hear all about the real you but I assure you in advance, I'll love it.
(she kisses him)
Jade -

SONDRA
Sondra - Pransky.

He hugs her.

CUT TO:

119 INT. SID'S HOTEL BAR/LOBBY PHONE - NIGHT 119

Sid can't sleep. Something is bothering him. He gets out the newspaper accounts of the apprehending of the killer. He finds what he's after, dials phone.

CUT TO:

120 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 120

Sondra in bed with Peter, about to make love. Her mobile phone goes off.

SONDRA
Oh gosh, who could that be?

PETER
Don't get it.

SONDRA
I have to. My father had his appendix out. My actual father - in Brooklyn.
(gets phone)
Hello?

CUT TO:

121 INT. SID'S HOTEL ROOM BAR/LOBBY PHONE - NIGHT 121

SID
It's me, you ok? Uh-huh... You told him?

CUT BACK TO:

122 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 122

SONDRA
Yes - it all worked out - er, Sidney - I'm a little indisposed at the moment.

CUT BACK TO:

123 INT. SID'S HOTEL BAR/LOBBY PHONE - NIGHT 123

SID
I need to talk to you. I had some thoughts.

CUT BACK TO:

124 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 124

SONDRA
Well now's not a good time. I'm er - shall we say - busy?

CUT BACK TO:

125 INT. SID'S HOTEL BAR/LOBBY PHONE - NIGHT 125

SID
What are you talking about? Where'd I reach you? Oh really? Oh - aha - I don't suppose you could tell him to take a cold shower and meet me.

CUT BACK TO:

126 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 126

He slides out of bed to change lighting.

SONDRA
I'll meet you tomorrow.

CUT BACK TO:

127 INT. SID'S HOTEL BAR/LOBBY PHONE - NIGHT 127

SID
I'd feel better if you didn't sleep there and we could talk.

CUT BACK TO:

128 INT. PETER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT 128

SONDRA
(sotto)
I hope you're not still caught up with the Joe Strombel fiasco. No Sidney, it's too silly to get into but if you want I'll meet you tomorrow. Why don't you come over to where I'm staying for lunch? They'll be out.

PETER
(returns)
Tell Sidney we're going to the country for a few days and he's invited.

SONDRA
(phone)
I'll call you in the morning.
(hangs up)
Sidney hates the country. He doesn't fish, hike, swim, ride, or hunt - just card tricks.

CUT TO:

129 INT/EXT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE/GARDEN - DAY 129

Sid and Sondra next day.

SONDRA
The reason we saw him was that he was involved in personal family business that's too delicate to get into.

SID
I don't buy it.

SONDRA
What?

SID
The man is a liar and murderer and I say that with all due respect.

SONDRA
Sidney -

SID
Please child -

129 CONTINUED: 129

SONDRA
I'm not your child. We can drop that.

129 CONTINUED: 129

SID
Remember when we were out at his parent's estate - I found what I said was a clue, you thought I was nuts.

SONDRA
I thought you were nuts so many times I can't recall that exact one.

SID
(producing scrap of paper)
Remember this doodle -

SONDRA
Betty G. So what?

SID
I was reading over the newspaper list of all the victims that were killed.

SONDRA
Yes?

SID
The one that was killed the night we saw Peter on the street was named Elizabeth Gibson.

SONDRA
So -

SID
So Betty is often short for Elizabeth.

SONDRA
Oh Sidney, you're really reaching.

SID
Wait - I get even more psychotic.

SONDRA
I'm sure.

SID
Obviously this crazy handyman Henry Banks is the Tarot killer.

SONDRA
Obviously.

129 CONTINUED: 129

SID
But Joe Strombel was so insistent.

SONDRA
I'm tired of hearing about Joe Strombel. Even a great reporter can mess up once in a while.

SID
Suppose a guy wanted to rub somebody out - and not get caught.

SONDRA
They never like to get caught, Sidney.

SID
Right. So he figures, how can he kill this Elizabeth Gibson, Betty Gibson and get away with it.

SONDRA
Let's go, Sidney, I have an appointment with some normal people.

SID
He knows there's been a series of killings and by a killer with a very identifiable style - the Tarot card -

SONDRA
They said Henry Banks is mentally deranged.

SID
So this fictional guy I'm making up, buys a Tarot deck, hides it where no one would look - let's say in a french horn in a music room - a locked music room.

SONDRA
Sidney -

SID
He removes the Death card... That's the one he left -

SONDRA
Sidney - I'm losing patience -

129 CONTINUED: 129

SID
He's not guilty of the other dozen murders but he does fold this one into the series quietly because he wants the Gibson woman dead.

SONDRA
But Henry Banks confessed to all of them.

SID
Yes but he's nuts. The cops said he hallucinates. Does he even know precisely what he's being asked? Can he keep track? Besides all these guys like to brag - and the cops are so happy they finally got someone, they're ready to dump every unsolved murder in the last five years on this guy - but at least one of those, Betty Gibson, was done by Peter Lyman. He studied the case, clipping out stories, making sure he could pull it off exactly like Henry Banks. ******
******
******

SONDRA
I won't sit here and have this poor guy - this rich poor guy who's nuts about me get maligned by your crackpot fantasies. This kind of thinking is so unlike you Sidney. I guess I really never realized how totally deranged your thinking could be.

SID
He was using misdirection. I use it all the time - every magician uses misdirection.

SONDRA
Well Peter's not a magician doing bar mitzvahs - he's a British aristocrat.

SID
Darling, bear with me - I'm not calling your fantasy fiancee a serial killer - I'm merely saying he did one of them.

129 CONTINUED: 129

SONDRA
Peter Lyman wouldn't hurt a fly.

SID
Really? What if it was a talking fly?

SONDRA
Why would Peter want to kill a prostitute?

SID
A relationship with a prostitute would not look great on his resume. Who knows how sordid his private life is. Let's say she was blackmailing him.

SONDRA
Are you having a breakdown? Peter involved with a hooker who's going to blackmail him? What have you been putting in your Metamucil?

SID
Why? His whole political future could be at stake. Somehow he got involved with her. A sexual weakness - now she threatens to expose him unless he comes up with a lot of dough - of course the payments are small at first - but soon they'd get larger - he sees it going on indefinitely - she's milking him, threatening to scandalize his career.

SONDRA
Sidney, you're a certifiable lunatic - a cynical crepe hanger who always sees the glass half empty.

SID
Wrong. I see the glass half full - of arsenic - and you drinking it.

SONDRA
Look, you don't have a reporter's instinct, ok? You're a guy who vanishes silk handkerchiefs and cuts people's neckties in two.
(MORE)

129 CONTINUED: 129

SONDRA (cont'd)
Do everybody a favor - go back to your card tricks.

CUT TO:

130 INT. THEATER/BACK STAGE - DAY 130

Sidney with Joe Strombel.

JOE
Did you tell her?

SID
I made it like it all came to me -

JOE
I'm sure I'm right. She just won't listen to me. She hates me.

SID
I worry about her.

JOE
I don't think I'm going to be seeing you anymore.

SID
If there's a scoop here - she'll get it for you.

JOE
You can only cheat death so often and I've used every trick I know. Take care of her... She's a decent kid... Oh, and check his Tarot deck - see if a card's missing...

And he's gone.

CUT TO:

131 EXT. RACETRACK - DAY 131

Sondra and Peter at the track.

PETER
My horse is in the next race and I have high hopes.

SONDRA
What's his name?

PETER
Red pyjamas. ******

131 CONTINUED: 131

SONDRA
(checking racing sheet)
Here's one called The Hanged Man - we can't get away from the Tarot deck.

PETER
I always said it would turn out to be some menial worker. I also said he wanted to be caught. They all want to be caught. ******

SONDRA
You think he did all the killings?

PETER
Didn't he? I assumed he confessed to all of them.

SONDRA
Yes, but he's mentally unstable - sometimes there are in America what we call copycat crimes.

PETER
It's always possible but the police seem confident they have their man.
(hugs her)
If it had been me as you suspected, I'd have used astrology signs rather than the Tarot - the public's more familiar with them.

SONDRA
It's been done in America.

PETER
Oh dear - you think I would have been sued for infringement?

He nuzzles her affectionately.

CUT TO:

132 INT. ELIZABETH GIBSON'S BUILDING - DAY 132

Sid going door to door in the building Elizabeth Gibson was killed.

SID
(to tenant)
I'm a reporter - I'm doing a story on Elizabeth Gibson - she lived here.

TENANT #1
I didn't know her. I hardly ever saw her come or go. She was quiet.

CUT TO:

133 INT. ELIZABETH GIBSON'S BUILDING - DAY 133

Sidney with Tenant #2.

TENANT #2
I knew what she did for a living but whether she entertained her clients here or not I couldn't say.

CUT TO:

134 EXT. ELIZABETH GIBSON'S BUILDING - DAY 134

Sid leaving building - runs into a woman who lives there.

SID
I'm a reporter. I was just checking out a story on Elizabeth Gibson. Did you know her?

JAN
What paper are you with?

SID
The er - The Washington Post - I'm one of their top - you saw All The President's Men... I'm the short guy.

JAN
Why is an American paper interested in this?

SID
Er - it's part of our travel section - places to avoid - I'll make it worth your while.

134 CONTINUED: 134

JAN
I knew Betty Gibson. She was a tough kid but she didn't deserve to die.

SID
Betty? Did you call her Betty?

JAN
Everybody called her Betty, that was her name.

SID
Did you know any of her customers?

JAN
She knew a million guys. She was sexy. Not that you could tell from those pictures in the papers. She used to be a very hot, baby faced blonde. The kind men go nuts over.

SID
A blonde? In the pictures -

JAN
Yeah. She made the mistake of cutting it and dying it black. Don't ask me why. Maybe to please one of her steadies.

SID
She had steady clients?

JAN
One for sure. Johns never use their real names but she did have one rich kid that saw her a lot. His name was - Peter -

SID
Peter? Yes?

JAN
Peter - Yardley - yeah... I'm sure it was a fake name. My name is Jan Potter - when you write your story.

SID
You remember what he looked like?

134 CONTINUED: 134

JAN
Never saw him...sorry... So, have I helped you?

SID
(offers her a bill and she looks at it)
Here - it may not seem like much but when you consider how weak the dollar is against the pound.

JAN
Are you kidding?

SID
All I'm saying is, spend it in America.

CUT TO:

135 EXT. STREET - DAY 135

Sid on street with his mobile phone, dials.

CUT TO:

136 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 136

Peter picks up phone.

PETER
Hello?

CUT BACK TO:

137 EXT. STREET - DAY 137

SID
Oh - this is Mr. Spence - Sid Waterman - where have I called?

CUT BACK TO:

138 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 138

PETER
Oh hello - this is Peter Lyman. Sondra and I are spending the weekend at my folk's country place. You could've come.

CUT BACK TO:

139 EXT. STREET - DAY 139

SID
Er - that's ok - er - She gave me your number - can I speak with her?

CUT BACK TO:

140 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 140

PETER
One second.

Puts phone down and gets Sondra. She gets on.

SONDRA
Sidney - hi.

CUT BACK TO:

141 EXT. STREET - DAY 141

SID
Listen, I have a treasure trove of information. I did some snooping on Elizabeth Gibson. She is called Betty and she had a thing with a particular guy who went under the name of Peter Yardley. Name mean anything to you?

CUT BACK TO:

142 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 142

SONDRA
(she digests this)
This is - crazy - stop making trouble, Sidney - the case is closed.

CUT BACK TO:

143 EXT. STREET - DAY 143

SID
Now listen - this thing adds up - you're alone with a very, very dangerous man - that's two verys. Get back to town.

CUT TO:

144 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 144

Peter in another room - he debates it and then silently picks up phone to listen on extension.

CUT BACK TO:

145 EXT. STREET - DAY 145

SID
He had something going with Betty Gibson. I'm sure he killed her and made it look like the Tarot killer. You just have stars in your eyes so you can't see straight.

CUT BACK TO:

146 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 146

SONDRA
Look Sidney, I can't discuss this anymore. I think you know that if there was a shred of proof I wouldn't let my personal feelings get in the way - but yes, I'm crazy about the guy and I can't keep obsessing over tantalizing conspiracy theories.

CUT BACK TO:

147 EXT. STREET - DAY 147

SID
Maybe we can get the cops to check the DNA.

CUT BACK TO:

148 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 148

SONDRA
I can't have this conversation. It's too upsetting. I'll call you when I get back to town - let me enjoy the weekend without putting paranoid thoughts into my head.

She hangs up troubled. Peter enters.

PETER
Is Sidney ok?

148 CONTINUED: 148

SONDRA
Don't get me wrong, I love Sidney, but he's also got a part missing.

PETER
Yes?

SONDRA
It's nothing. I don't even want to talk about it. Let me change.

CUT TO:

149 EXT. PETER'S HOME - DAY 149

Sid pulls up or walks to Peter's townhouse. He rings bell. Housekeeper comes to door.

HOUSEKEEPER
Yes? Oh yes sir -

SID
My daughter's at the country house with Mr. Lyman. I'm driving up there. She asked me if I'd pick up her red cashmere sweater and bring it up.

HOUSEKEEPER
Red cashmere -

SID
Yes - she thinks she - left it here - red, like a cherry red - a tomato-

HOUSEKEEPER
I understand sir. I'll see if I can find it.

She goes. Sidney waits until he's alone, then steals down to the music room.

150 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY 150

SID
(to himself)
16 blue midgets - no, 16 jet planes - 12 - 21 -

CUT TO:

151 INT. PETER'S HOME - DAY 151

Upstairs, Housekeeper searches in vain.

CUT BACK TO:

152 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY 152

Sid opens room.

CUT BACK TO:

153 INT. PETER'S HOME - DAY 153

Upstairs, Housekeeper about to give up.

CUT BACK TO:

154 INT. PETER'S HOME/INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY 154

Sidney finds the tarot deck and key.

CUT TO:

155 INT. PETER'S HOME/EXT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY 155

Housekeeper coming down - she can't find Sid, she looks around, goes upstairs.

CUT BACK TO:

156 INT. PETER'S HOME/INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY 156

Sid rifles the deck.

SID
(looking heavenward)
You're right Joe - the death card is missing ...but what's the key?...

He hears Housekeeper coming downstairs. Puts everything back. Then, in process of exiting room - something hits him with a bang.

He has an idea. He stops, goes back in the room, takes key and pockets it. He is caught exiting by the Housekeeper.

HOUSEKEEPER
Sir -

156 CONTINUED: 156

SID
Oh - I just wanted to have a look at the Stradavarius. I play a little myself - nothing great - a little Brahms - Schubert - The Hot Canary.

HOUSEKEEPER
But only Mr. Lyman has the combination to that room.

SID
Yes, I know but he wanted me to have it - in case anything happened to him... Stroke or plane accident - and someone needed a fiddle - to round out the string section - couldn't find the sweater eh? I guess she left it home - Ta, and god bless you, you're a wonderful housekeeper, a credit to your race - what are you, a Scorpio probably - I can tell by the face...ha, ha...bye...

CUT TO:

157 EXT. PETER'S HOME - DAY 157

He's out. Sidney on his cellphone in the street, calling a car rental company. ****** ******

CUT TO:

158 INT. PETER'S HOME - DAY 158

Housekeeper on phone with Peter.

HOUSEKEEPER
Mr. Lyman sir, Mr. Spence has been here and he's been into your music room.

CUT TO:

159 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 159

PETER
What do you mean?

CUT BACK TO:

160 INT. PETER'S HOME - DAY 160

HOUSEKEEPER
A most unusual sequence of events - Mr. Spence came by looking for his daughter's sweater, said she requested it...next thing I knew he was in the music room - sir, I think he must've been drinking from his behavior...

CUT BACK TO:

161 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 161

PETER
I see, I see... Ok Margaret, thank you.
(hangs up)

SONDRA
(entering)
Everything ok?

PETER
Er - yes - yes - it will be.

CUT TO:

162 INT. ELIZABETH GIBSON'S FLAT - DAY 162

Sid tries key - it works. That's all he needs to know.

CUT TO:

163 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE/LAKE - DAY 163

Peter and Sondra pulling off in his small boat, they go to center of lake far from shore.

SONDRA
I love being out on the lake. You leave the rest of the world behind.

PETER
I come out to read once in awhile. And fish. There are trout in the lake.

SONDRA
What are you thinking?

PETER
You really want to know?

163 CONTINUED: 163

SONDRA
Yes.

PETER
How ironic life is and tragic.

SONDRA
Why?

PETER
That I met you by rescuing you from drowning and found you totally enchanting and now we've come full cycle and alas you're going to have to drown.

SONDRA
What?

PETER
I would imagine by now Sidney has confirmed that I killed Betty Gibson. In my own defense, there was simply no other way out.

SONDRA
I don't believe what I'm hearing.

PETER
I was born into great privilege. There's so much I want to do to alleviate the suffering of people not as fortunate. I am a man on a mission of good. I couldn't let a very promising political career be cut short by a scandal with a prostitute albeit a very compelling one. At first I managed to hide my identity but I saw her too many times over the years and eventually she learned who I was. It became a constant demand for money and I couldn't let that go on. Not that I couldn't afford it but my life and career would always be hostage to her moods. I studied the Tarot case - rehearsed my plan - and you know the rest.

163 CONTINUED: 163

SONDRA
And the fact that you fell in love with me - you could still kill me?

PETER
You're the best thing I ever met - but I got myself into a hopeless situation. Try to understand. I meant well.

SONDRA
You won't get away with it. If something happens to me, Sidney will turn you in.

PETER
You will be in a boating accident. Sidney will go later tonight. No one knows of your relationship with him - after all, you're not actually father and daughter and who will think twice to investigate the death of some obscure vaudevillian who's really a stranger to me. Quiet isn't it? This is the advantage of a private lake.

He rises and goes for her. They struggle, he manages to throw her overboard and pull away leaving her in the middle of the large lake floundering wildly.

CUT TO:

164 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 164

Shot of Sid driving himself fast up to the country estate, he's driving fast and wild.

CUT TO:

165 EXT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 165

Peter has landed at shore and he pushes the boat off so it looks like it drifted in by itself.

CUT BACK TO:

166 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 166

Sidney driving - adjusting his glasses.

CUT TO:

167 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 167

Peter entering house and making a call.

PETER
(phone)
Police. This is Peter Lyman - I need the police immediately - there's been a terrible boating accident - a woman has drowned. Please come right away - it's awful.
(hangs up)

CUT BACK TO:

168 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 168

Sidney driving up - his car races past camera and out of sight we hear a tremendous collision. All goes silent over an empty screen.

CUT TO:

169 INT. LYMAN ESTATE - DAY 169

Later, police are there.

COP
They're retrieving the body right now, I'm so sorry, sir.

PETER
(playing heartbroken)
When last I saw her she said she wanted to go out there and just communicate with nature - to think - she wanted peace and quiet.

DETECTIVE
She wasn't depressed or anything lately was she?

PETER
Oh god no - unless she was keeping it from me.

DETECTIVE
And you heard no cries for help?

169 CONTINUED: 169

PETER
I was here listening to music. It's so ironic because the way I first met her, I rescued her from drowning in our club pool. She was a very weak swimmer.

169 CONTINUED: 169

Suddenly Sondra appears, first her voice, then her, wet.

SONDRA
I was faking it in the swimming pool - to get your attention - actually I was captain of the Queens Community swimming team.

All heads turn to Peter who knows the jig is up.

CUT TO:

170 INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY 170

Malcolm looking over the story. *******

MALCOLM
(to Sondra who's there)
Fascinating observation - Lyman lost his cufflink at the flat of a prostitute who was later killed by the Tarot Killer - this upright chap certainly enjoyed patronising some dodgy women - unfortunately for Elizabeth Gibson, she elected to blackmail him. Well, it's a beautifully written story and one of the most exciting pieces of investigative journalism in a long time. This paper's proud to run it.

SONDRA
I have to share the credit with Joe Strombel - an inspiration who taught me more than I can ever explain to anyone. And to the late Sidney Waterman - Splendini - a nice guy who helped in this investigation and without whom I would not have made it. Sidney, wherever you are, I'll never forget you.

CUT TO:

171 EXT. DEATH BOAT - NIGHT 171

Sid on with various others.

POLLY
(to Sid)
How'd you get here?

171 CONTINUED: 171

SID
I wasn't used to driving on the goddamn wrong side of the road - in America I'd have made it up there, saved her, been a hero. That's the one drawback of living in London - true, they have better theatre -

POLLY
Er right.. What did you do?

SID
Splendini - The Great Splendini - magician. A prestidigitator. Would you like to see a card trick? Have we time?
(pulling out deck)

PHIL
(another passenger)
I believe we have eternity.

SID
Oh good, a captive audience. Here, take a card...let him see it - and I'm going to ask you to concentrate - is it a red card? Even number? An eight of hearts?
(group is amazed)
I got another beauty - but I need a little help. What's your name, honey?

ALMA
Alma -

SID
Alma darling, what'd you die of?

ALMA
Snakebite.

SID
Snakebite? How venomous. No, I'm kidding - let's hear it for this lady who died of a snakebite - what's your sign darling?

ALMA
Taurus.

171 CONTINUED: 171

SID
The bull - beautiful...meet me later in my dressing room, I'll sink my fangs into you - teasing, teasing - think of a card - picture it in your mind...

FADE OUT.